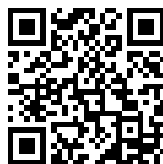

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I am bound in common honesty to admit that occasionally we find persons who can do without it. We find men here and there who, with no hope for the future, are yet living noble, useful, self-denying lives, spending and being spent for others, taking the most enthusiastic interest in all that concerns the well-being of their fellow-men, content to work and to suffer, that humanity may be better off, when they themselves shall have passed (as they think) into non-existence. All honour to such men. But there will never be many like them. Just think what the denial of immortality means. Take, for instance, the sketch of Universal History which was given us by the late Professor Clifford. In the beginning, he said, there was an infinite number of dead, inanimate atoms. These, falling through space, came into contact with one another, and by their fortuitous concurrence were evolved, first of all a mass of fiery vapour, and then worlds, animals, men, instinct, reason, memory, imagination, will, thought, worship, love. If that were all, we could rest content; progressive Evolution must be the work of God. But that is not all, according to Professor Clifford. He sketched for us the future work of Evolution as well as the past; and that future work will consist, he said, in *undoing* everything that has been done. Instinct, reason, memory, imagination, will, thought, worship, love, are all to pass away and be no more.

The planets and the stars, after having lasted long enough to be the *charnel-houses* of the sentient creatures which — at some time or other—probably existed upon all of them, will gradually be forced together into one central mass, which will radiate its heat into space, and at last become a frozen block. That is to be the end ! All honour to the men who—in such a universe—could still love goodness and pursue it. But could you ? Could I ? I fear not. We should say to ourselves : If the universe be so fundamentally irrational and so diabolically tantalizing, why should we tremble about character ? We should say to ourselves, Surely there can be no right and no wrong for a being who has been made, and who will be unmade, by dead, unthinking atoms. We should say to ourselves, What can it matter how we act ; if our life be but a momentary gleam of consciousness in the passage of the atoms from the fiery cloud to the frozen block ? In such a universe we should be stricken—should we not ?—with the paralysis of despair.

That goodness would be impossible for the majority of us, if we believed ourselves in an irrational universe—and without immortality the universe would be irrational—that goodness would be impossible for the majority of us, if we believed ourselves in an irrational universe, was admitted, curiously enough, in the ablest book that was ever written to prove the contrary. Most of you, I daresay, have read *Natural Religion*. Some of you may have seen my reply,—which was entitled *The Basis of Religion*. The author of *Natural Religion* tried to show that we could get on very well without the hope of Immortality. But in a remarkable Postscript he practically took back all he had previously said. The passage is as follows : “ We may well doubt whether the natural, the material, can suffice for human life. No sooner do we try to think so—no sooner do we try to get rid of the idea of Immortality—than Pessimism raises its head. The more our thoughts widen and deepen, the more accustomed we become to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance, the more contemptible become the pettiness, the shortness, the fragility of the individual life. For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice. We say, What matter if I pass ? let me think of others. But the other has become contemptible too, no less than the self. Human griefs seem little worth assuaging ; human happiness too paltry (at the best) to be worth increasing. The whole moral world is reduced to a point. Good and evil, right and wrong, become infinitesimal, ephemeral matters. The affections die away—die of their own conscious feebleness and uselessness. A moral paralysis creeps over us.”

On the other hand, if we believe in Immortality we shall feel that it is worth while to do our duty, and worth while to strive after perfection. *Worth while !* Do not misunderstand that phrase I am

not referring to the vulgar view of rewards and punishments. There is nothing more contemptible than to regard the working out of Salvation as a business transaction, in which, by the performance of a few irksome acts, we purchase for ourselves the title to a comfortable, easy-going state of existence by and by. That is not Salvation. To be saved is to be good. And to be good is to love goodness for its own sake. He who chooses it for the sake of payment, would prefer evil, if he thought it paid better ; and consequently he does not really love goodness at all. Of the good man it may be affirmed—

He asks no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky ;
Give him the glory of going on and not to die.

He asks only that the goodness which he has chosen, he may be able to attain *and to keep*. He asks only that he shall not be *stultified* by the irrationality of the universe. I have admitted that here and there you may find a man who, even with the hopeless creed of the materialist, will still love goodness and pursue it. Such a man was the late Professor Clifford, whose dismal doctrine I just now quoted. "I have seen," he said, "the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven ; and I have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion was dead." Yet, even in this state of spiritual desolation, he continued to regard character as the most precious of all possessions. But it is none the less a fact that Clifford's doctrine is a doctrine of despair ; and despair, for *almost all* men, is *enervating, depressing, paralyzing*. Hear what Renan has said on this subject : "Let us deny nothing, affirm nothing, but wait in hope. It is a beautiful custom that, when we pass away, we introduce music and incense, as expressions of our yearning for a higher sphere. The day in which the belief in an after-life shall vanish from the earth will witness a terrific moral and spiritual decadence. Some of us perhaps might do without it, provided only that others held it fast. But there is no lever capable of raising an entire people, if once they have lost their faith in the immortality of the soul."

And just as there is nothing more enervating, more demoralizing than despair, so there is nothing more stimulating than hope ! Tennyson speaks, you remember, of the mighty hopes that make us men ; and the mightiest of all is the hope of Immortality. To believe in Immortality is to believe that there is reason and Righteousness at the heart of things. To believe in Immortality is to believe that there is a Somewhat, a Some One, without us, willing, longing, to answer the aspirations within us. The man who has such a faith will feel that, with every moral effort, he is doing something to hasten the glorious consummation—"the one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

To him it signifies but little what becomes of that which men call matter. He is certain that Evolution cannot end in an anticlimax.

like Plato, Sophocles, Lycurgus, Cicero, belonged to these societies, and maintained that they wielded a mighty influence for good. The process of initiation, as with Masonry, embraced a number of ceremonies designed to try the mettle of the candidates. If the aspirant was found worthy and received, other ceremonies followed—ceremonies which symbolized some of the more profound doctrines of Religion, and in particular the doctrine of Immortality. The mysteries were at once funereal and festive, beginning with the insignia of Death and ending with suggestions of eternal life. It was sought, by the splendour and secrecy thrown around these societies, to establish their doctrines in the reverential acceptance of the people, and to enhance the power of the Priesthood and the State. To compass these ends all the resources of the ancient world were called into requisition. Dr. Oliver, in his *History of Initiation*, gives an account of the dramatic ritual which was employed in the Mysteries of Vitzliputzli in South America. The candidate began by descending what was called the Path of Death. He traversed grim caverns excavated under the foundations of the temple. Phantoms flitted before him; shrieks appalled him; pitfalls and sacrificial knives threatened him. At last, after many blood-curdling adventures, he arrived at a narrow fissure, through which he emerged into the light of Day, where he was welcomed with frantic shouts, as a person born again, by the multitude, who had been waiting for him during the process of his initiation. And the Eleusinian Mysteries must have been more impressive still. The rites were carried out on the most stupendous scale. The temple at Eleusis was capable of holding 30,000 persons. Under such imposing circumstances, you can imagine how a neophyte might be overawed by a set of men who were acquainted with chemistry and electricity and gunpowder and hydrostatic pressure, with every scientific secret and mechanical invention that had been discovered. Darkness like that of the Mammoth Cave, darkness that might be felt, suddenly gave place to dazzling, blinding light; the floors of the building seemed to heave and the walls to crack; thunder bellowed through the mighty dome; now the ground yawned beneath his feet and revealed the hideous scenes and scenery of Tartarus; and anon the mild beauties of Elysium burst upon his ravished gaze amid strains of celestial music and the sublime apparition of the gods.

Well, you see—do you not?—the force of my illustration. I said for the full answer to our question—"Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"—we must be content to wait. Just as the arcana of the ancient Mysteries were reserved for the Initiate, so the secret of Death belongs exclusively to the dead.

It has been magnificently said: "The preliminary ceremony of the Mysteries was but a copy of our human experience. The awesomeness of the approach to the sacred audytum was like the awesomeness of

the entrance to the Unseen World. *Their* initiation was but a miniature symbol of the *Great* Initiation through which every mortal man must pass."

When a fit applicant, after the preliminary probation, kneels (with fainting sense and pallid brow) before the veil of the Unknown, when the last pulsations of his heart tap at the door of eternity, when he reverently asks leave to participate in the secrets that are shrouded from the profane view of mortals, then the Infinite Hierophant orders the curtain to be drawn aside by Death—*Death*, the speechless steward of the celestial Mysteries. And after the awestruck neophyte has passed within, the blinding bandage of the body is taken from his soul, and he *sees* the answer to his old pathetic question: "Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"

In the meantime, here and now, may be found—"darkly hinted in types, faintly gleaming in analogies, softly whispered in hopes, passionately expressed in desires, patiently confirmed in argument, suddenly revealed in moments of inspiration"—here and now may be found suggestions, intimations, foreshadowings, of a life beyond the grave—a life broader, deeper, brighter, better than the present. These various suggestions, intimations, *foreshadowings* it will be my purpose in the present course of sermons to gather up. God grant that when the course is finished we may be able to repeat—with a more sure and certain hope than we can command to-day—the inspired words of Mr. Greg—

Slowly—slowly—darkening,
The evening hours roll on;
And soon behind the cloud-land
Will sink my setting sun.

Around my path life's mysteries
Their deepening shadows throw;
And as I gaze and ponder,
They dark, and darker grow.

Yet still amid the darkness
I feel that light is near;
And in the awful silence
God's voice I seem to hear.

The great, unending future,
I cannot pierce its shroud,
But I nothing doubt nor tremble—
God's bow is in the cloud.

To Him I yield my spirit;
On Him I lay my load:
Fear ends with Death; beyond it
I nothing see but—God.

Thus moving towards the darkness,
I calmly wait His call,
Seeing—fearing—nothing:
Hoping—trusting—All!

The Benignity of Death

It is sometimes supposed that if Adam had not sinned he would have been roaming about among the flowers of Paradise to this day. In other words, it is supposed that man was intended to be physically immortal, and that death is the punishment of his wrong-doing. Now, this supposition finds no support in the Bible, and it is contradicted by conscience, by common-sense, and by science. It finds no sup-

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port in the Bible. We read there that God said to Adam, "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" But he did not die—*physically*. He is declared to have lived 930 years. Consequently it was not physical death with which he had been threatened. The word death is often used in the Bible metaphorically. For instance, "As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, much more by one shall all be made alive." That which Adam forfeited, Christ—according to the Apostles—restored. But Christ did not restore physical immortality; because it was not physical immortality which had been forfeited. That which Adam incurred, Christ—according to the Apostles—removed. But Christ did not remove physical death; because it was not physical death which had been incurred. Adam's fall resulted—as *our* fall results—in strife, despair, misery, degradation—all of which is implied in the word death. Christ's mission was to result, through the restoration of Righteousness, in peace, confidence, and indestructible happiness—all of which is implied in the word life. We have then no warrant in the Bible for the supposition that physical death is the punishment of sin.

Further, such a supposition is contradicted by conscience. Physical death comes to men quite irrespective of their transgressions. It falls equally on the good and on the bad. It does not permit the best men to live longest; it carries off the innocent babe as well as the abandoned criminal. It depends on the iron laws of the material world; it is not related to the spiritual sphere of justice and conduct and character. It exercises no discrimination; and therefore, as a *punishment*, it would be unjust.

But *spiritual death* discriminates with unerring accuracy. Remorse, unrest, degradation—these things come to us strictly according to our deserts. We reap them only as we have sown.

Again, common-sense contradicts the supposition that if man had never sinned he would have been physically immortal. Common-sense suggests that the Infinite God, after deliberately laying a plan, would not allow a demon to step in and compel Him to change it into a wholly different one. Common-sense suggests that, apart altogether from sin, man must always have been liable, at any rate, to accidental death. If Adam had fallen into the water, without knowing how to swim, he would have been as inevitably drowned *before the Fall* as after. Common-sense suggests that, unless some individuals died, others could not live. Imagine, for the sake of argument, that Adam had never sinned, and that the human race had been endowed with physical immortality. What would have happened? Why, there would soon have been too many people in the world to find sustenance, too many to find *even standing room*.

The descendants of Adam, doubling every twenty-five years, would have produced, in less than a hundred generations, many trillions of

human beings, whose bodies, packed two or three deep, and conglomerated into one solid mass, would have covered the entire surface of the planet. That surely could not have been the original intention of the Creator.

Scripture, then, conscience, and common-sense alike suggest that sin was not the cause of death. And this suggestion is confirmed—demonstrated—by scientific research. Geology, which is the earth's autobiography, reveals to us the fact that death *preceded* moral transgression. Whole races of animals perished ages before man appeared upon the scene. We come across their remains in strata deposited millions of years ago. Now, physically considered, man is governed by the same laws, and subject to the same forces, as what we call the brutes. His life, like theirs, is carried on by the waste and repair of tissues. And, in consequence, he must die *as inevitably as they*. Sin has nothing to do with *their* death, and it has nothing to do with *his*. He was made perishable from the first. The succession of generations, one generation passing away to make room for another,—this was not an after-result foisted into the world by the devil. The office of death belonged to the primeval plan. The Creator's purpose was, not that man should live on earth for ever, but that, after a time, he should leave his tabernacle of flesh and depart to some other sphere. Of course, his experience in the other sphere would depend upon his moral character in this. If he sinned here, the consequences would follow him there. But sin was not, and could not, have been, the cause of his physical death.

The origin of Death is to be found in the laws of life. Death is *but the other side* of life. Life and death are inseparable factors in every organic process. Organisms, as you know, are built up of cells. Each cell is possessed of a certain modicum of force or energy, and when its force is expended the cell is dead. The formation of a plant is possible only by the continuous dying and replacement of its cells. Similarly the growth and well-being of an animal depends on the perpetual change of its constituent parts. For example, the epidermis, or outer skin, is made up of millions of tiny cells, which, with their dead bodies, form a guardian wall around the inner and more tender parts. And the death of the total organism is just as needful as the death of its component atoms. The mineral elements die—that is, surrender their peculiar powers and properties and enter into new combinations—in order that vegetables may live. Individual vegetables die (1) that other individual vegetables may live, (2) to furnish sustenance for the animal kingdom. The individual beast dies (1) to make room for other individuals of his species, (2) to supply the wants of man. The human being dies (1) for the good of his fellows here, and, (2) as we hope, that he and they may enter into a higher state of being hereafter. Thus, you see, death is a necessary element in the process of life. The wedded

laws of growth and decay are revelations of the infinite mercy of God. Death is an echo of the voice of Love, reverberated from the inevitable limitations of material life. It is not a discord marring the happy destiny of man. It contributes to the divine harmony of the universe.

There are two considerations—one of which I have already hinted at—there are two considerations that will bring out in strong relief the benignity of Death: (1) The deathlessness of some would prevent others from being alive at all, and (2) even to those who were endowed with it, deathlessness would be a terrific curse.

1. I say the deathlessness of some would prevent others from being alive at all. Death multiplies—infinately multiplies—the numbers of the living. It calls up fresh generations to the perennial banquet of existence. Instead of being confined within a narrow circle, the boon is endlessly diffused. Instead of smouldering in the motionless grasp of the single age, the torch of life is passed along through many, and so it gains in brilliance. The amount of satisfaction that can be received from any given pleasure by a thousand persons, each of whom experiences it for an hour, is immensely more than one person could receive from it in a thousand hours. And so the Creator has ordained that living creatures shall never monopolize the joy of life.

2. Physical Immortality would be a terrific curse, even to those who were endowed with it. Take away death, and you not only exclude men from the possibility of a higher life in the future, but you make the present life completely valueless. Just think. Physical Immortality could only be rendered possible—even supposing the laws of life permitted it, which they do not, but allowing for the moment that they do—physical Immortality could only be rendered possible by a strict limitation of numbers. Since none are to be removed from the earth, no more after a certain time can enter it. The space and material are wanted for those actually in possession. In consequence, not another infant would ever hang from a mother's breast or be lifted in a father's arms. What a stupendous fragment would thus be struck from the fabric of human happiness! Think, further, of the kind of life which these Immortals would have to live. Century after century, millennium after millennium they see the same everlasting faces, confront the same ever-recurring phenomena, engage in the same worn-out exercises, or lounge idly in the same unchanging stagnation. They have drained every spring of knowledge. They have exhausted every source of enjoyment. No dim marvels, no boundless hopes, beckon them towards the future. They *have* no future. They have nothing but a never-ending now. The incessant repetition, the unmitigated sameness, the eternal monotony of things would grow horrible and appalling to them. The world would become a hateful dungeon, and life an awful doom. What would they not give to migrate to some

untried existence ! They would be thankful even to lie down for ever in the attractive unconsciousness of the tomb.

The whole matter, then, may be summed up in the words of the poet—

Oh, wondrous scheme devised on high,
At once to take and give ;
He that is born begins to die,
And he that dies to live.
For life is death, and death is life,
A harmony of endless strife ;
The mode of universal growth
Is seen alike in both.

The Desire for Immortality

LET me tell you a story which is somewhere told by Emerson. Two members of the United States Senate were accustomed to find, in the midst of their political engagements, as many opportunities as possible for the discussion of speculative subjects. Their favourite topic was the immortality of the soul. But they could never find any satisfactory reasons for believing it. After a time one of them retired from Congress and went to live in a distant place. They did not meet for twenty-five years, and then it was at a crowded reception at the White House. With some difficulty they made their way to one another through the brilliant company. They shook hands long and cordially, but for a while did not utter a word. At last one of them said, "Any light, Albert?" "None," he replied. After a pause the other inquired, "Any light, Lewis?" and the answer again was "None." They looked silently into each other's eyes, gave one more grasp each to the hand he held, and then parted for the last time.—After relating this story, Emerson says the impulse which prompted those men to seek proof of Immortality was itself the strongest of all proof. I think that Emerson was right.

Let us see. Man has an instinctive love of life. It is not the love of being here, for he often loathes the scene around him. It is the love of personal existence. We regard our conscious being as above all things precious. We shudder at the very thought of annihilation. We cannot bear the idea of losing ourselves, of disappearing into nothingness, or sliding into the abyss of unconscious matter. This feeling is an inseparable element of our nature. And, mark you, it is not to be confounded with a mere shrinking from bodily death. It is an instinct of self-preservation, of soul-preservation. The most primitive of men cannot help distinguishing vaguely between his thinking soul and his unthinking body. And he soon begins to suspect that when death approaches to destroy the one, it may be possible for the other to escape. This is a very early doctrine of the human race. It is almost always to be found among barbarians. The

ordinary savage implicitly believes in a future life. The idea is suggested to him, in all probability, by the phenomena of dreams. In sleep his *alter ego*, his other self, appears to be independent of the body, and to wander away at will. And the same sort of thing, he imagines, will happen when he dies. At first, and indeed for a long time, the next life is regarded as less real than this. The soul of the departed is thought to be a ghost—a mere shadow. It was this conception of Immortality, as we shall see another time—it was this conception of Immortality which prevailed among the Jews, among the Greeks, among the Romans. Sheol, Hades, Orcus—each was a realm of shades. And of course people who held such a view looked forward to death with sorrow and dismay. But later on in the Evolution of Man, it begins to occur to him that perhaps the next life may be an *improvement* upon this—pleasanter, nobler, more real. With eager gaze he looks round him for analogies—analogies that will throw a hopeful light upon his fate. Seeing the snake glide forth after it has cast its slough, he fancies that he too in dying may but lose a worn-out garment which the spirit no longer needs. Observing the beetle break away from its filthy sepulchre and enter on a new career, he immediately hangs a golden scarabæus in his temples as an emblem of his hope. He perceives that when the winter has passed away, there comes a resurrection of foliage, and of fruit, and of flowers; so he dreams of some far-off springtime for his race, when the frosts of their destiny shall disappear, and the costly seeds that have been sown through the ages shall burst out into everlasting life. As he stands at dawn by the ocean-shore, lamenting the death of a shipwrecked friend, he sees the sun arise in glory, though perchance the night before it had set in gloom; and at once the thought occurs to him that his comrade also may rise again. He is told fabulous stories of a bird that in old age surrounds itself with spices and sets light to them, soaring aloft, rejuvenescent from the aromatic fire. Straightway he takes the phoenix to be a type of the soul—the soul that shall spring forth immortal from the ashes of his corpse. He watches the silkworm as it weaves the cocoon and lies down in its grave to all appearance dead; he sees it at length come out, a winged moth, clad in the colours of the rainbow, endowed with higher faculties, and fitted for a brighter life. Forthwith he engraves a butterfly on the tombstones, and imagines that he too may by-and-by disentangle himself from the fetters of the flesh and be free to range at pleasure through the entire universe of God. Rightly or wrongly, all such similitudes serve to strengthen man's conviction that there is an existence beyond the grave, to foster in him the hope that he may survive the dissolution of the body, that he may even emerge triumphant from the wreck of the whole material world. And the desire for Immortality is no less persistent than profound.

THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY 19

Springing up in the earliest ages, it has survived to this day. It is felt alike by illiterate peasants and by the imperial thinkers of our race. There are some cultivated people, no doubt, who have lost all hope of a future life ; but even they cannot eradicate the desire for it. Disbelievers unite with believers in saying—

*Blessed hope that would point in its gladness
To the dreams of a bright world beyond !
Were we sure of its truth in our sadness,
Never more would our torn hearts despond.*

Just listen to the words of two eminent disbelievers. " It is with the utmost sorrow," says one, " that I find myself obliged to accept the conclusion here worked out. I am not ashamed to confess that the universe has lost for me its soul of loveliness, and although from henceforth the precept ' to work while it is day ' will doubtless gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words, ' the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of the creed that once was mine and the lonely negation of existence as I now find it, it will ever be impossible for me to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible." And another disbeliever in Immortality speaks as follows : " There is consolation, no doubt, in the thought of a heavenly Father who loves us, and who will assign us, in another life, an infinite reward for all the endurances of this. Above all, there is comfort in the reflection, that when we are parted by death, we are not parted for ever ; that our love for those whom we have cherished on earth is no temporary bond, to be broken ere long in bitterness and despair, but a possession never to be lost again—a union of souls, interrupted for a little while, only to be again renewed in greater perfection and carried on into far higher joys. All this is beautiful and full of fascination. Why should we deny it ? Candour compels us to admit that in giving it up, with other illusions of our younger days, we are resigning a balm for the wounded spirit, for which it would be hard to find an equivalent in all the treasures of philosophy, in all the *répertoires* of science." These are illustrations, which might be multiplied indefinitely, of the fact that even when a man has lost all hope of Immortality, he is unable to rid himself of the desire for it. *That is ineradicable.*

Now, a desire so profound and so persistent must have been purposely implanted in our hearts by Him who made us. We may therefore regard it as a prophecy. It is the pledge of its own fulfilment. There is a scientific axiom to the effect that the existence of an organ implies the existence of a field for its operation. For example, there would be no fins unless there were water to swim in ; no wings unless there were air to fly in, and so on. Important discoveries have frequently been made by following up this simple clue.

I will give you an example. An explorer, while traversing a desert came across a little saurian with a swim-bladder. He took the hint, and continued his explorations, until he found the shores of a dried-up lake, where ages before the little saurian had found a home. That which God promises He always performs. And so we may be certain that the dread of non-existence would never have been woven into the inmost fibres of our being, unless we were destined for Immortality. God will keep His word with us. The desire for eternal life, which is *felt* by every son of man, often develops into confident expectation. There are many—an innumerable company—who have a sure and certain hope that by-and-by they will come into the more immediate presence of God, and be enabled to live in closer communion with Him whom they adore. Could He respond with annihilation ?

Sure—the souls so true and trusting
 Shall not trust for aye in vain ;
 Sure—there must be something, somewhere,
 Which shall meet that trust again.

If poor man, so weak and lowly,
 Yet can rise to faith so high,
 Sure the eternal God who made him
 Will not give his faith the lie.

The Injustice of Life

DID you ever come across the following epitaph ?—

Here lie I, John Elginbrod ;
 Have mercy on my soul, O God !
 As I would do, if I were Thee
 And Thou wert me, John Elginbrod.

Daring words ! but not more daring than Abraham of old addressed to his Maker. Gen. xviii. 25 : " That be far from Thee, Lord, to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " He who is going to judge others should Himself be just. And to treat the righteous like the wicked would be wrong. You see, there is a wrong for Deity no less than for Humanity. There are certain things which God ought not to do. *He* has duties as well as we. And the first, the most paramount, of His duties is to be just. Our deepest moral instinct is the love of fair-play. We demand of the Creator—we may not venture to say so, but in our inmost hearts we demand of the Creator that He shall treat His creatures—all His creatures—equitably. His doing so to 999 out of 1,000 would not satisfy us. If one—even the humblest and meanest—were defrauded of his rights, our sense of justice would be shocked. And instances of *apparent* unfairness, far from being exceptional, seem rather to be the rule. In fact, justice so often fails in this world, that History is little more than the record of its failure. Just think !

To begin with, there is premature mortality. Nearly one-half of our race perish before the age of ten. Life is given and taken away, to all appearances, without reason or rule. In this respect, as in all others, Nature shows the most absolute want of heart. At one fell swoop are snatched away—infant, sage, hero, martyr, sot. Courage is struck down in battle, whilst cowardice fattens on the spoils of war. A consummate villain may live to a hoary old age, and a man consecrated to the service of his fellows be cut off in his prime—on the eve, perhaps, of some signal discovery or achievement.

Then, again, think of those to whom the gift of life is almost, if not entirely, worthless. Many of our fellow-creatures are sentenced at their very birth to penal servitude. Look at that long procession of weary faces and bowed forms and stunted figures! They are the people who do nothing but stitch, and hammer, and dig, and toil, and who are rewarded for their work by a wage that just keeps them alive, just enables them to continue their weary round. The appalling emptiness of their existence is, well described in this little poem—

Hushed are the engines of the mill,
Out of its gates the toilers go
Into the twilight, damp and chill,
And down the paths of the sloping hill
To the town below.

There are children there with faces sweet,
But pinched and pale, and worn and thin
And they hurry on with weary feet
To the wretched home in the dreary street,
Ere the night begin.

Home to the drunken curse and blow,
And the meagre meal of poverty;
To crouch by the hearth where the fire is low,
While golden dreams in the embers glow
That can never be.

And when the early gleam of day
Glitters upon the steeple vane,
Through the streets in the morning grey,
With hurrying steps they haste away
To the mill again.

Back to the ever-rolling wheel,
Back to the never-ceasing loom,
To toil till the dazed senses reel,
In the din of the crashing steel
And the smoky gloom.

By-and-by comes the twilight chill,
Then out of the gates again they go
Into the evening dark and still,
And down the paths of the sloping hill
To the town below.

Poor wretches! They know that great things are in the world, that great deeds are doing, in which they can have neither part nor lot. They know—at least they have a vague feeling—that goodness is as much out of their reach as happiness, that there is *something* in

them which has never had a chance. Hapless mortals! who die without having really lived.

You may say these are extreme cases. But that does not justify them. Besides, the inequality, the seeming unfairness of life, is exemplified in all of us.

Each on our own strict line we move, and some find death ere they find love. Prosperity and adversity are seldom awarded with any regard to merit. Sunshine and sorrow do not depend either on effort or desert. The good are often destitute, and the bad eminently successful.

Some of the best of men are the victims of disease, and drag out their years in agony. Some of the worst, with seared consciences and nerves of iron, revel in all the enjoyments that health and money can bestow. The virtuous suffer for the vicious; the idle thrive on the industrious. Saints are crucified, and the scum of the earth wag their heads in derision. True, there is sometimes compensation. In the breast of the sufferer there may reign "the peace that passeth understanding." But even this may be withheld. It was withheld from Christ. Oftentimes, we are told, martyrs on the funeral pyre

Would lift their raptured looks on high,
As though it were a joy to die.

But it was not so with Him. In the supreme hour of His agony, He felt, not peace, but despair. "My God! my God!" He exclaimed, "why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The greatest of the martyrs was denied the ordinary reward of martyrdom. Jesus of Nazareth passed away in darkness and in doubt.

If, then, this world be all there is for us, its Author is not just. Regarded as a system complete in itself, it is riddled through and through with wrong. And yet we cannot bring ourselves to think that it was made by chance, or created by a devil. There is too much beauty in it for that, too much rationality, too much happiness, too much progress. We cannot help believing that it has emanated from a Being who is wise and good. *And in that case* we should find in our present subject the strongest possible argument for Immortality. The inequalities of earth bear unmistakable testimony to a compensating world beyond. The apparent caprice with which happiness is now distributed affords incontrovertible evidence of a hidden sequel. For the future is needed to redeem the present from contempt. Immortality alone can vindicate the character of God. What if He allowed Christ and Herod, Paul and Nero, Timour and Fénelon, to drop through the blind trap of death into the same condition of unawakening sleep? What if He turned to destruction the whole human race, when so many of them had never tasted the cup of happiness, when so many of them could not but be vile? Why, you and I would be ashamed to act like that; and shall mortal man be more

just than God? Shall man, with his dream of Immortality, rise superior to anything his Maker can achieve?

It is impossible. And therefore the inequalities of life need not so much distress us. They will be explained by-and-by. Even now we can see the necessity for some of them. The world is governed—as any rational world must be governed—by laws; and these laws, though in the long-run working together for good, cannot but entail occasional suffering and disaster. Moreover, men are free to act as they choose, and they often choose amiss. They are hampered, too, by the sins of their ancestors, and by the difficulties of their environment. And so, through the brief span of their present existence, they find themselves in a confused medley of good and evil, of harmony and discord. But the discords are being slowly resolved; the evil is being surely annulled; and eventually the Creator will be justified of *all* His creatures. There is love somewhere for the desolate. There is goodness somewhere for the depraved. There is justice somewhere for the slaves of heredity. There is light somewhere for the most darkened. There is a chance somewhere for those who had no chance on earth. And there awaits for all of us somewhere a renewal of departed happiness, a fulfilment of faded hopes, a realization of vanished dreams, a recompense—a god-like recompense—for the unmerited hardships of our mortal life.

Some day, but not yet,
Somewhere, but not here,
God shall by thee set
Joys from each past year.

Each sweet bower that shaded
Shall again bloom fair;
Each sweet flower that faded
Once more scent the air.

Light shall on the mountains
Clear shine after rain,
And the long-dried fountains
Well up fresh again;

Old familiar faces
Greet thee as before,
Whilst thy heart rejoices
That ye part no more.

All things true and tender
Shall thine eyes behold,
In the new light's splendour,
Fairer than of old.

And thy soul forget
Grief, remorse, and fear—
Some day, but not yet,
Somewhere, but not here.

The Incompleteness of Life

HERE, I think, we shall find another argument in favour of Immortality.

Man is the incompletest thing on earth. All else—star, ocean, mountain, bird, beast, insect—has a certain perfection. It fits into its own place, it gives no hint that it might have been other than it is. But not so man. His body, it is true, is completely developed. But which of us has reached the plenitude of his mental or his moral capabilities? The body is often compared to a scaffolding, and the spirit to a temple built up within it. If the comparison be a just one,

we have the strange anomaly of a mere framework, made so perfect that it could gain nothing by being preserved for ever, while that for the sake of which it was called into existence is left unfinished, is sometimes indeed scarcely begun. The average lion is a type of lionhood. But where will you find the man who is a type of manhood? Why, even the saint, the philanthropist, the hero, the thinker—each of these does but represent *a single phase* of the *all-round, full-orbed, ideal* man.

If we were meant to be *happy*, we never thoroughly attain our end. To some *the very word* is unmeaning, so uniformly wretched is their lot. And to the most fortunate of us there come, now and then, visions of happiness infinitely brighter than anything we have actually known.—If we were meant to be *good*, that again is an end which we never completely reach. There are souls, to be reckoned by the million, whose circumstances have made it practically inevitable that they should be desperately wicked. And the best of us are precisely those who feel most keenly *how much better* we might have been.—If we were meant for *service*, to confer benefits on our fellows, to further the progress of the world, in that case also the end of our being remains unrealized. Here, too, we fail far oftener than we succeed. Our labours are unfruitful and disappointing. Of a thousand seeds sown, and watered with blood and tears, only a few arrive at maturity. Hundreds of soldiers die in the trenches for one that mounts the breach. Half our efforts are in the wrong direction; and the other half are too clumsy and feeble to produce any great effect. Should we be able to say, at the close of life, that we have enjoyed a little happiness and done a little good, we shall be more fortunate than the majority of our race. But assuredly, when we look back upon our career, we shall be unable to regard it with complacency, as a part perfectly filled, or a work thoroughly accomplished. The finer the spirit, the profounder the insight, the more unconquerable will be the sense of incompleteness. You remember that touching soliloquy in the “Passing of Arthur”—

O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world
And had not force to shape it as he would!

* * * * *

For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but striven with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I leaned in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.

Even if we have managed to achieve some partial successes, nevertheless the sense of incompleteness will be little, if at all, diminished. Theodore Parker on his deathbed exclaimed: “I wish I could carry on, carry out, my work. I have only half used my powers.”

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The fact is, our endowments are altogether out of proportion to a life of threescore years and ten. *Reason, Will, Conscience, Love*—all these carry with them implications of eternity. Take Conscience. On this alone Kant based his famous demonstration of Immortality. Conscience bids us aim at perfection, and perfection is not to be reached on earth. If, therefore, this life be *the only* life for us, we are over-weighted in our moral nature. All we required was some sort of *instinct*, such as that which deters an animal from eating noxious food. Conscience needs an enduring arena for its operation. Giving it to an ephemeral being would be like setting a mighty engine to propel a rowing-boat, like building an Atlantic liner to steam across—a rivulet.

I remember reading somewhere that Pietro, the tyrannical Duke of Florence, in one of his capricious moods ordered Michael Angelo to mould a statue of snow—a statue that the warmth of an Italian sun would dissolve in a single day. A sad waste of artistic skill! But that is as nothing compared to the prostitution of creative power in making beings like ourselves to rot for ever in the tomb. If it is intended that we should merely cross the petty stage of earth, then our noblest faculties are deceptive and useless excrescences. As soon as we learn to live, we are called upon to die. We spend our allotted span in sharpening our tools, in finding out how to use them, and *then* we are removed from the workshop. Must there not be some other place in which we shall exercise our craft? Annihilation would be an absurdly incongruous sequel. Nay, it would be worse than absurd. It would be a species of infanticide, committed in the most deliberate manner and carried out on the most gigantic scale. Character continues growing to the end of life. Many of our best qualities—such as *humanity, forbearance, contentment*—are the fruit of weary and protracted discipline. And shall our existence terminate just when we are most fitted to appreciate it, to understand it, to make use of it? Shall the beginning of our success be the signal for our extinction? Is our goal to be our grave? God surely would proportion means to ends. He would see to it that our nature corresponded to our destiny. He cannot have endowed us with faculties entirely out of keeping with our fate.

There is no incongruity when a leaf falls to the ground and dies; for it gave no promise of further development. But it is different with a rosebud; for that implies a rose. When the canker-worm devours it, there is loss, waste, failure. And can it be that in the Garden of Souls every bud shall canker ere it bloom? If so, we are the most pitiable of all created things. As we advance in culture we only obtain a wider survey of possibilities that will never be realized, of glory that does but tantalize and mock us! Each step in our ascent is a preparation for a deeper fall. The more brilliant our endowments,

the more terrific is our doom. We can but echo the melancholy sentiment—the saddest that was ever expressed in human speech—

What good came to my mind I did deplore,
Because it perish must, and not live evermore.

Unless, then, our existence is going to turn out a most astounding, most appalling fiasco, it must be continued beyond the grave. Everything indicates that it will be. Everything indicates that we have been born to an inheritance which fadeth not away. Everything indicates that death only transfers us to a nobler sphere of being. Everything indicates that our threescore years and ten form but a short chapter in the volume of our life. This is the only adequate interpretation of the facts of experience. And the more persistently we act in accordance with it, the more profoundly are we convinced that it is correct. He who lives as if he were an immortal being, becomes gradually *assured* of his immortality. The future life, for him, has passed from the realm of belief into that of knowledge. It has ceased to be a hope; it has grown into a certainty.

Here sits he shaping wings to fly.
His heart forebodes a mystery;
He names the name—*eternity*.

I will give you an illustration. At the close of his life Victor Hugo spoke as follows: "I feel Immortality in myself. I am rising, I know, towards the sky. The earth gives me its generous sap, but heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more luminous as the bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. *There* I breathe at this hour, as I did at the age of twenty, the fragrance of lilacs and violets and roses. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds to come. It is marvellous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, yet a fact. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and verse; history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all. But I feel I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I shall have ended my day's work. But another day will begin next morning. Life closes in the twilight; it opens with the dawn."

That is beautiful. And, as I am trying to show you in the present course of sermons, all the facts of our common experience are arguments in favour of its truth.

*The facts of life confirm the hope
That, in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed—not undone.*

The Nature of the Soul

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole
 I thank whatever gods there be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud ;
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade ;
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll :
 I am the master of my fate ;
 I am the captain of my soul.

WE have among us, barely without the four-mile radius from Charing Cross, the man who wrote these four quatrains, or rather cast them in clanging bronze ; yet simply because he is alive, because the voice of our homage could reach him, and to some extent mitigate for him "the fell clutch of circumstance," we hesitate to hail him a great poet—W. E. Henley.

What is the soul ? Is it a function of the body, or an independent being ? Is it made up of changes in the organism, or is it entirely inorganic ? To use the old Platonic similes,—Is the soul related to the body as a tune to a musical instrument, or as a rower to a boat ? In the one case, of course, it must die when the body dies. In the other it need do nothing of the kind. A tune would inevitably come to an end, if the instrument on which it was being played were broken up ; but a rower may survive a wreck.

At the first superficial investigation of the subject, we may be inclined to take the despondent view. From the physical standpoint a man is made of matter, just like a plant. The vital force in each case is material. It is derived ultimately, no less than chemical or mechanical force, from that great reservoir of power—the sun. Under suitable conditions, life takes possession of certain portions of matter, and raises them to the level of organic existence. In time, after a wavering conflict between waste and renewal, these material organisms decay and fall to pieces. This law holds good throughout the whole organic realm—from the bulb of a weed to the brain of a Cæsar. When the weed dies it is resolved into its component parts, and there is an end of it. And so with Cæsar. In death his body is destroyed ; and, if that is *not* an end of him, at all events he gives no sign to the contrary. Such phenomena not unnaturally *suggest* the idea of personal annihilation ; but do they prove it ? Let us see.

It has been acutely remarked by Mr. Grey that when we look upon

the corpse of a friend, we are seized by an irresistible conviction that somehow the body lying there is not he whom we loved. It does not produce the effect of his personality. We miss the picture though we still have the frame. What is present only makes more vivid the feeling of absence. We have seen the eyes as firmly closed, the limbs as motionless, the breath almost as imperceptible, the face as fixed and expressionless, in sleep or in trance, without experiencing the same peculiar feeling. We cannot get rid of the idea that that body, quite unchanged to all appearance, is not, and never was, our friend—the being we were conversant with; that his individuality was not the *garment* before us PLUS a galvanic current; that in fact the person we knew once and still seek *was not that—is not there*.

Pure fancy! perhaps you say. Well, let us look into the subject somewhat more deeply. Let us try if we cannot discover the essential nature of the soul.

Now, I can easily show you this much at any rate. Mind—by the way, I always use the terms *mind, soul, spirit, self, ego, personality, individuality*, as synonymous—Mind is the very *antithesis* of matter.

Only hopeless incompetence or deliberate sophistry could possibly confuse things which are so essentially dissimilar. Sensation, thought, emotion, hope, volition, remorse are unthinking as modes of material substance. There is nothing in common between an aspiration and an atom, between a sentiment and a gas, between an idea of truth in the mind and a mass of matter in space. It is an incredible, inconceivable, nonsensical idea, that our mental experience consists of a shifting concourse of atoms, a plastic combination of particles, a regular succession of galvanic shocks, or any other collection of material phenomena. For the two sets of things are in all respects different; and it is therefore a contradiction in terms to declare that they are the same. Material things are *extended, divisible, ponderable*. Mental things are *unextended, indivisible, imponderable*. You cannot measure a thought; you cannot weigh a sensation; you cannot divide an emotion. Your mental life is destitute of all the qualities of material existence, and it possesses all the qualities which the material existence lacks. Matter and mind belong to different realms. They are separated by the whole diameter of being.

Further. Not only are the *experiences* of the soul dissimilar to anything which can take place in the organism, but the soul itself is a *simple, single, identical* being. That fact alone would serve to distinguish it for ever from the body and from every other kind of matter. In the material world there is, strictly speaking, no identity. When we say that the same tree has stood fifty years in one place, we mean only that it is the same for purposes of property and use and ornament. The particles of which it is composed are certainly not the particles of the original tree. But a new element appears when we enter the realm

of mind. Here, notwithstanding the fact that the substance of the body is in perpetual flux, the same conscious personality persists, growing ever richer in experiences, but remaining always identically itself. We know that we have been *ourselves* as far back as memory will reach. Every act of remembrance reveals to us our unity. Every act of remembrance makes us conscious of our personal identity. Every act of remembrance produces in us the conviction that the mind which is experiencing the recollection of a certain fact is the same mind which formerly experienced the fact itself. For instance, I remember an accident that happened to me ten years ago. *To me—ten years ago.* I therefore must have existed, must have persisted, from then till now. And in the meantime I, one and the self-same ego, a single, indivisible, permanent being, have *felt* and *thought*, and *remembered* and *reasoned*, and *loved* and *hated*, and *hoped* and *feared*, and *willed* and *acted*, and by means of my *IDENTITY* have gathered up these varied experiences into the unity of a personal life.

Again, there is another, and still more striking, difference between mind and matter. I have often discussed it, both in my Books and in my Sermons. Any one who is interested in the subject should read my Essay on Personality. I can only now state the fact—the fact, viz., that while matter is necessitated, mind is free. The soul balances opposing motives; it chooses between rival solicitations; it forms resolutions; it decides on its course of action; it carries out its chosen designs. It can summon to its aid thoughts that will help in the suppression of a base passion, or in the kindling of a noble sentiment. When hurried along by some wild and delirious temptations, it can pause in mid-career and ask itself,—Shall I, ought I, to proceed? Within limits it can make its life what it will. In view of all this, it is imbecile to maintain that the life of the soul is a mere tune—a tune played by the body. How can a tune deliver its own notes? How can an instrument play itself? Until an organ is seen to blow its bellows, mend its keys, move its pedals, and begin to discourse music of its own accord; until a violin is seen to screw up its strings, wield its bow, and give a spontaneous performance, until every Cremona becomes a Paganini, we shall be compelled to believe that the soul is a *dynamic, causative* entity, a *free and independent* being, which uses the body as an instrument, and plays thereon the harmony or the discord of its life.

If such be the nature of the soul, it cannot be destroyed by death. No material processes can disintegrate a spirit. Through all the changes of its body, through all the vicissitudes of its experience, the Soul continues to be itself. It survives the flux of phenomena in life, and there is no conceivable reason why it should not survive the flux of phenomena in death. To remain identical in the midst of change is the essential characteristic of an ego. Muscle, nerve, brain, body belong to

a realm of being where the laws of dissolution reign supreme. But the fretful sieges of decay can never reach the soul. It is fortified in a spiritual sphere.

The soul, secure in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
But *thou* shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt, amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

The Greatness of Man

IN the light of modern astronomy Man would seem to be inexpressibly little. The more the universe grows upon us, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance. When we look into the unfathomable abysses of space ; when we see worlds scattered everywhere—innumerable as the grains of sand upon the ocean-shore ; when we remember that this earth of ours is but a tiny, outlying corner of the universe ; when we realize the fact that the whole life of our race does not occupy a *single tick* of the Great Sidereal Clock—we feel dwarfed into nothingness, and we are seized by an intolerable heart-ache. Of what consequence, in this infinitude, are we poor atoms with our ephemeral wants and hopes and aims ? Is it not preposterous to expect that the Maker and Sustainer of it all will vouchsafe us any notice or support ? And as for Immortality, we can but echo the words of Robert Buchanan—" Shall *we* survive, when suns go out like sparks, and the void is strewn with the wrecks of worn-out worlds ? " But this despairing conclusion is a mistake. It is altogether unwarranted by facts.

In the first place, I observe, if you are going to introduce considerations of physical bulk—they have nothing to do with this subject, as I shall explain in a minute—but if you will persist in bringing them into the discussion, it can easily be shown that Man is not so very little after all. There are some things, no doubt, larger than he ; but there are *more* things smaller. And it is only fair to look in both directions.

The discoveries of the microscope balance those of the telescope. The *animalculæ* magnify man as much as the *nebulae* belittle him. A single grain of musk contains so many atoms, that it can impregnate a room by their exhalation for a quarter of a century, and at the end of that time it will not have been perceptibly diminished. An ounce of gold may be divided into 432 billion parts, each microscopically visible. Quadrillions of minute animals, dwelling in a drop of water, find room enough and to spare. There is a deposit of slate in Bohemia, covering forty square miles to a depth of eight

feet, every cubic inch of which contains 41,000 million insects. They are as much smaller than men as men are smaller than the astronomic heavens. And yet each of these little creatures possesses a muscular organism as perfect as an elephant's. So, you see, the Creator does not care for things, or neglect them, according to their bulk. He would be a strange sort of Creator if He did. For—and this is the second point—bulk has nothing whatever to do with worth. It is from the experience going on within a man—not from the firmament without—that his importance and his destiny are to be inferred. The human mind—with its thought and reason, its faith and love, its conscience and aspiration—the human mind is the same in its intrinsic value, whether the universe be as small as it seemed to Abraham, or as large as it appeared to Humboldt. Indeed the value of the mind is continually growing more apparent, as faculties which were at first but latent become in course of time actively developed. For instance, the telescope, in rending the veil of distance and laying bare the outer courts of being, has given one of the most sublime proofs of the transcendent greatness of man. Since he has measured the distance and ascertained the weight of Sirius, it is surely more appropriate to kneel in amazement before the inscrutable mystery of his genius, than to be plunged into despair by the mere size of a star. Shall we humble ourselves before a brute mass of matter? After looking above, let us look within, and then we shall be able to say with the poet—

I feel
 Among these mighty things that, as I am,
 I am akin to God; that I can grasp
 Some portion of the reason in the whole,
 The whole is ruled and founded; that I have
 A spirit, nobler in its cause and end,
 More wonderful in plan, far greater in its powers
 Than all these swift and bright immensities.

Who would not prefer to be the soul that can predict the movements of the heavenly bodies for centuries to come—who, I say, if the choice were given to him, would not rather be the astronomer than the whole of that array of revolving worlds? The soul is not made for them. They are made for the soul. They are the dwelling-places of man, and other children of the King. A Prince is of more consideration than a Palace—would be of more consideration, though its foundation pressed the shoulder of Serpentarius, though its turret touched the brow of Orion, though its wings extended from the Great Bear to the Phoenix. And similarly, one noble thought is greater than any earthly planet, one divine aspiration is greater than a whole stellar system of dust and gas, a single human soul is greater than the entire material universe.

The more we reflect, the more profoundly do we realize the insignificance and littleness of *matter*. Let me give you two illustrations.

The first will be rather difficult to follow. I am not quite sure that I can make you understand it, but I will try. You have heard, I daresay, of the doctrine of Idealism, a doctrine which has been held by most of the world's ablest thinkers—by Plato, for instance, by Berkeley, by Hegel. According to these philosophers, mind is the only real, and therefore the only indestructible, existence. Matter is no substantial entity, but a mere phenomenon or appearance—a transient show produced by the continuous volition of the Deity. By-and-by, when that volition is withdrawn, it will at once relapse into nonentity. The stars, the earth, the body, are but so many exertions of divine force, projected into vision, to serve for a season as a theatre for the training of human spirits. When that purpose has been accomplished, in the twinkling of an eye the phantasmal exhibition will disappear, the material universe "will vanish like a ghost before the sun," leaving nothing behind—but souls.

You may say that is only a piece of metaphysical guesswork. Well, a similar conclusion can be reached, if you prefer it, along the Pathway of Physics. Newton, in his *Principia*, demonstrated the infinite compressibility of matter. Now, just think what the infinite compressibility of matter means. It means that all the worlds which roll in space could be condensed into a single globe no larger than a walnut. Suppose they were. Then, it has been superbly said, on that petty lump of apparent substance—still only apparent, for it could yet be reduced into absolute invisibility—on that petty lump of apparent substance, where reposes all that remained of a universe of earths, the enfranchised soul, as it prepared for its immortal flight, might trample in an exultation of magnanimous scorn, the reflected glory of departed worlds, flashing the while from its deathless wings.

Immortality, then, is implied in the very nature of the soul. That it should be the victim of death is incongruous with its rank in the scale of being. When the energy of stellar systems is dissipated, and the whole of the physical creation has perished, then, according to the forecast of materialism, the soul, like a belated butterfly, will fall frozen on the *débris* of a lifeless universe. But this dismal note of the materialist is refuted by the grandeur of the faculties which enables him to form it. It is an erroneous idea; yet, at the same time, it is an idea which only a powerful mind could conceive. And if we think of all that genius has accomplished from the beginning until now—if we think of the saints, the heroes, the saviours of our race, nay, if we think but of ordinary human lot, we shall feel it is *impossible* to believe that man could have been endowed with such capacities only to be annihilated in the end.

For ever and for ever
The changeless oceans roar;
And dash their thundering surges

Upon the sounding shore ;
 Yet this keen soul, this lightning will,
 Shall these, while they roll on, be still ?

For ever and for ever
 The eternal mountains rise,
 And lift their virgin snows on high
 To meet the silent skies.
 Yet shall this soul, which measures all,
 While these stand steadfast, sink and fall ?

For ever and for ever
 The swift suns roll through space ;
 From age to age they wax and wane,
 Each in his ordered place ;
 Yet shall this soul, whose piercing eye
 Foretells their cycles, fade and die ?

For ever and for ever
 God willed it, and we are
 More wondrous than the ocean wave,
 Far greater than the star.
 Though suns stand still and time be o'er,
 We are and shall be ever more.

Man's Right to Immortality

IMMORTALITY is a debt which the Creator owes us, and which He is in honour bound to pay. If we were not immortal, He would be eternally disgraced. What, you say, the Creator disgraced because a few insects on this tiny speck of a planet are not eternal ? Yes ; size has nothing to do with it. Questions of right and wrong are not to be decided by a yard-measure and a pair of scales. Should I be justified in cudgelling an infant because it was so small and defenceless ? Am I under greater obligations to keep my word with a man who weighs twenty stone than I should be if he weighed only ten ? Don't you see, it is ridiculous even to mention in the same breath the terms *morality* and *bulk*. They are incommensurable.

Right begins with sensibility or the capacity for feeling. No sentient creature ought to be *needlessly* pained. And therefore, on account of the unmerited suffering of animals, a compensating Immortality has often been claimed for the whole brute creation. Bishop Butler, Frances Power Cobbe, and a host of sympathetic people have hoped, as Tennyson puts it—

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete.

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Some persons, no doubt, imagine that heaven would be profaned if the soul of an animal were admitted. I confess I do not agree with

them. In going through the world I have made the acquaintance of several dogs which I would much rather meet again than some human beings I could mention. However, *De gustibus non est disputandum*—there's no accounting for taste. And I am not going at present to discuss the immortality of animals. I shall confine myself exclusively to the Immortality of man. And so it will be possible for any one to accept what I say, and still believe—if it gives him pleasure to do so—that the whole of the brute creation will perish everlastingly.

My subject this morning is *man's* right to Immortality: *His right* to Immortality. It is often—perhaps generally—assumed that as regards God we can have no rights, that upon Him we can have no legitimate claims. We must call Him God, forsooth, not because He is good, but simply because He is the Creator. The fact of His having made us *entitles Him* to act towards us in any way He may happen to please. There is no *reciprocity* of obligation between us and Him. He has all the rights; we have all the duties. Though the creature is bound to act well by the Creator, the Creator is not bound to act well by the creature. Because He has made us, *therefore* He may do with us anything or everything or nothing. *Pshaw!* Is a father at liberty to neglect, to starve, to degrade, to insult a child simply because it is his own? Why, it is just this—just the fact of the child being his—which would render such conduct pre-eminently heinous. Since he is responsible for the child's existence, he is under the most solemn obligation to do all he can to make that existence a success. Indeed, he ought not to be a father at all unless there is a reasonable prospect of his being able properly to provide for the comfort and welfare of his children. Many human beings have refused to marry, for fear of bringing children into the world whose bodies would be inevitably diseased, and whose lives would therefore be inevitably wretched. And do you mean to tell me that an infinite and omnipotent Creator is under less obligation than a weak and finite man? On the contrary, with every rise in the scale of being the sphere of obligation is enlarged. The greater the endowments of a father—the more powerful, the richer, the wiser he is—the happier his offspring should be. The more he *can* do for them, the more he *ought* to do. What, then, ought not *God* to do for us?

We are not merely His creatures, not merely *things* that He has *made*, but beings into whom He has infused something of His own nature and essence. How do I know that, say you? I will explain. *Man's* faculties—or some of them, at any rate—are *God's* faculties. Everywhere in this world of His we see signs of Reason, of Conscience, of Will. Take *Reason*. The laws of nature are rational laws, which our intelligence can discover, appreciate, and express in precise mathematical formulæ. Take *Conscience*. That is ever bidding us do good and eschew evil. And the Power, not ourselves, also makes

for Righteousness. Take *Will*—the faculty of choice, the faculty which enables us to carry out definite intentions and accomplish pre-conceived plans. And is not the universe full of adaptations, designs, purposes, methods? and does not each one of them bear witness to the existence of a superhuman will? Our faculties, then, though infinitely less developed, are nevertheless *precisely similar in kind* to the faculties by which the worlds were framed. Every human being is *potentially, latently, in essence, divine*—

A vase of earth, a trembling clod,
Constrained to hold the breath of God.

We are the Creator's children. And will our Father kill us?—kill us before we have fully lived? We find within ourselves a thirst for happiness, and yet we are seldom happy. We find within ourselves an ideal of perfection, and yet we are miserably imperfect. We find ourselves possessed of faculties that are but meagrely developed during our present life. As I said the other day, man is the incompletest thing on earth. Though from one point of view the most finished of God's works, from another he is the most unfinished—for his best achievements are *but beginning* when he is called upon to die.

The true end of our existence cannot possibly be realized on this side of the grave, and so we are led inevitably to look for a life beyond. Immortality is implied in our very constitution. Our sense of incompleteness is a prophecy of it. The yearning for it which has been implanted within us amounts *virtually* to a promise.

Else why this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after Immortality?
Or why this secret dread, this horrid fear,
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself affrighted at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter—
And intimates eternity to man.

Is the Creator deceiving us? Will He mock our immortal longings with a paltry threescore years and ten? Will He extinguish our life just as we learn to live? When we are hoping for illimitable progress, will He cast us into unmitigated night? When His children turn to Him with faith and hope—when they lift up their hearts to worship—when, perchance, they have begun to love Him—when for His sake, that they might be better prepared to meet Him, they have suffered the loss of all things, will He welcome them, as they come into His presence, with annihilation? If so, He is not good, He is not God. There is no God. Upon the throne of the universe is seated a jeering fiend, who finds his devilish joy in torture, cruelty, and wrong. And you surely would not worship a thing like that. You would

not call such a creature by the sacred name of God. He deserves only execration and contempt. It is true, our deplorable helplessness might induce us to flatter and cajole Him ; but to do so would be degradation—the lowest conceivable degradation. If there were any manhood in us we should scout Him to his face.

But it cannot be that the Devil reigns supreme. To state such a supposition is to refute it. Is it likely that the Creator has made us better and holier than Himself ? Is it possible that conscience should have been implanted in us by a fiend ? He who gives us the sense of justice must Himself be just. And therefore we may trust Him, even when we cannot trace Him. In spite of the unsatisfactoriness of the present life, there is, nevertheless, so much beauty in it, and so much sweetness, that we may reasonably believe the promise it holds out of more. In spite of all the unsolved riddles of existence, we have, nevertheless, received sufficient proofs of the Creator's care to warrant our looking forward with full assurance to that last and greatest gift which He owes it to Himself to bestow—the gift of immortal life. In spite of everything that tempts us to doubt Him, we ought—you and I—to be able to say with the Quaker poet—

In all the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed state my spirit clings—
I know that God is good.

Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; but Righteousness and Justice are the foundations of His throne.

Immortality in the Light of Evolution

It was once the fashion to sneer at Evolution. But that time has long since passed. Formerly the ministers of religion set themselves to denounce Evolution. But even so long ago as the death of Darwin a eulogistic sermon upon him was preached by no less orthodox a person than Canon Liddon. Evolution is now accepted by all educated men ; and in the light of it the doctrines of Religion must be tested. Nothing can be true which is contradicted by facts. At first the fact of Evolution was supposed to be inimical to faith. As the poet puts it—

When Science from Creation's face
Enchantment's veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
To cold material laws !

But if we look longer at these material laws, we shall see they have a beauty of their own—a beauty, indeed, far surpassing any that attached to the old unscientific visions. If we study these material laws carefully, they will at once confirm and ennoble our faith. For instance—and this is what I am going to speak about—the discovery of the law

of Evolution has furnished us with a powerful argument for the Immortality of the soul. *Let us see.*

We had better begin by contrasting the new idea of creation with the old. You know what the old idea was, I suppose. If you are more than twenty years of age it was probably taught you in your infancy. If, however, you are less than twenty years of age you may not know much about it, for of late it has been rapidly passing into oblivion. So perhaps I had better explain it to the more youthful. It was this. On Sunday, October 23, B.C. 4004, God began to make the universe. The method which He adopted was the method of a man—of a working man. He made it—artisan fashion—just as a carpenter might make a box, or an optician a pair of spectacles. Everything, and every part of everything, was the result of a special act of divine contrivance. Earth, sun, moon, stars were created separately, quite independently of each other; and so were the different species of plants and insects and fishes and birds and beasts. Then man was made, by another distinct and isolated act of creation; and finally—as an afterthought—woman. All this occupied the Deity a week—Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—yes, the inside of a week, just six days. The universe was intended to last about six thousand years. And so History was divided into three Epochs: the first two thousand years from the beginning to Noah; the second from Noah to Christ; the third from Christ to the Day of Judgment. By that time the Deity would have grown tired of His handiwork, and would therefore proceed to destroy it. Very curious—is it not?—this childlike *guess* at the history of Creation.

Especially curious to us, living as we do after the real facts of the case have been discovered. *We* know that the universe was created by the method of Evolution; and that Evolution has been going on for millions—not of years—but of æons; a time so vast that thought reels in the very effort to conceive it. The evolution of the universe involves, of course, the evolution of worlds and the evolution of life. As to the former—the evolution of worlds—Kant was the first to suggest that the sun and the stars, the earth and the planets, were not created separately, but were produced by a gradual condensation of glowing vapour or fiery dust. This hypothesis—the nebular hypothesis, as it is called—this hypothesis has since been practically verified by telescopic and spectroscopic research. The heavenly bodies we can now actually watch in the making; here an irregular, incandescent nebula, there one which has cooled down and assumed, in consequence, the shape of a sphere; here and there stars of different colours, denoting different stages of chemical development; now planets still partly aflame, like Jupiter and Saturn, then planets like Mars and the earth, with cool atmospheres and solid continents and vast oceans of water; and lastly such bodies as the moon, vapourless, rigid, cold in death.

That is the way in which worlds have been, and are being, created.

When they are sufficiently cool life begins to appear, in low forms at first, which are slowly but surely transmitted into higher. This transmutation is the origin of species. It proceeds continuously from age to age, till one kind of living creature is developed into another and totally different kind—that is to say, into an entirely different species.

In science, you know, the term species implies great dissimilarity. The most similar kinds of living creatures are called varieties, the least similar kinds are called species. Now, Darwin's hypothesis—and subsequent discoveries have verified it—Darwin's hypothesis was, that SPECIES have been evolved by *natural selection*, just as we ourselves are accustomed to produce VARIETIES by *artificial selection*. For example, our domestic pigeons are all descended from the ordinary blue rock pigeon. By selecting birds with certain peculiarities, and choosing from each successive brood only those which exhibit the peculiarities in the most marked form, the breeder has succeeded in producing varieties as distinct as the fantail, the tumbler, and the pouter. The same method has given us various races of dogs—races as diverse as the bloodhound, the terrier, and the spaniel. Similarly, in the vegetable world, the various kinds of *apples* have all been produced from the small sour crab. Now, just as we select the peculiar kind of individual which *we* want, so Nature selects the peculiar kind of individual which *she* wants. And the kind she wants is the *best* kind—the kind best adapted to its environment. Natural selection is the survival of the fittest. The least fit die off; the most fit survive. By the laws of heredity the descendants of the fittest become fitter still; and so there is a continuous production of higher and higher types, and finally of new and distinct species. Since, in the short space of a lifetime, we can produce *somewhat dissimilar* varieties, there is no difficulty in believing that Nature, with almost infinite time at her disposal, should be able to produce *absolutely dissimilar* species; there is no difficulty in believing that the single-celled moneron which dwelt in the slimy ooze at the bottom of the sea, after untold æons of Evolution should have culminated at length in man.

At first, as I said, the fact of Evolution appears to be inimical to faith. The universe is so vast, both as regards space and time, that man seems in danger of being lost in it. Astronomy discloses giant balls of vapour that condense into life-bearing planets and afterwards grow cold and dead. We hear of a time when systems of dead planets will fall in upon what was once a sun, and the whole lifeless mass, in thus regaining heat, will expand into fiery vapour like that with which we started, and the work of condensation and Evolution begin over again. These Titanic events may well appear to our limited vision as meaningless as the weary task of Sisyphus. BUT, on the surface of

our own planet, where alone we are able to survey the process of Evolution in its later and higher details, we find distinct evidences of a meaning, a purpose, a plan, of what Professor Fiske has well called a dramatic tendency. From the first dawn of life—and all that preceded had been but a preparation for life—from the first dawn of life we see all things working together towards a goal, and that goal was the creation of man. As Dryden—with the poetic insight which so often anticipates the discoveries of science—as Dryden finely said—

From harmony to heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony,
Through all the compass of the notes, it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of Evolution, the more fully convinced shall we be that it is throughout a rational process, and that therefore it *cannot* come to an irrational conclusion, cannot end in an anticlimax. The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of Evolution, the more profoundly shall we feel that to deny the immortality of the soul is to rob the whole process of its meaning. Man is a fruit which it needed all that went before to ripen. He is the last and greatest achievement of Evolution. To suppose that what has been evolved at such a cost will suddenly collapse, is to suppose that the whole scheme of things is self-stultifying. It is to convert the mighty drama of Creation into an imbecile and drivelling farce. No! Man's life, we may rest assured, is but beginning when his existence on earth is closed. What was unfinished here will be completed hereafter. Immortality is the only possible climax to that creative work which has been in all its myriad stages so wonderful, so divine.

I will conclude with the sublime hymn on Evolution composed by the Rev. Mr. Savage of Boston—

The one life thrilled the star-dust through,
In nebulous masses whirled,
Until, globed like a drop of dew,
Shone out a new-made world.

The one life on the ocean-shore,
Through primal ooze and slime,
Crept slowly on from more to more
Along the ways of time.

The one life in the jungles old,
From lowly, creeping things,

Did ever some new form unfold—
Swift feet or soaring wings.

The one life all the ages through
Pursued its wondrous plan,
Till, as the tree of promise grew,
It blossomed into Man.

The one life reacheth onward still:
Some day our eyes will see
The far-off fact our *dreams* fulfil
Of glory yet to be.

The Resurrection

I

WE come now to a specially interesting branch of the subject—the Resurrection. This we will consider to-day negatively, noticing what it is not; and next Sunday possibly noticing what it is. My present

sermon is purely destructive. Negative and destructive work must always precede the positive and constructive. This morning, therefore, I shall content myself with refuting the theory of a physical Resurrection. It is a travesty, a burlesque, of the Scriptural doctrine of Immortality. And unless we perceive the falsity of the one, we shall be unable to applaud the truth of the other.

The theory of a physical Resurrection, the belief that our flesh will rise again, has existed, at some time or other, in almost all countries. For instance, it is distinctly taught in the Koran. There we are told that when the angel Israfil blows the Resurrection blast, the souls of men will issue from his trumpet like a swarm of bees, and will fly about incessantly till they find their former bodies. The process of embalming was, as a rule, the outcome of this belief. A missionary once asked a Peruvian why his people were so careful to embalm their dead. He replied, "On the day of the Resurrection every one will come forth with such part of his body as remains intact, and there will be no time to hunt around for anything that is missing." The Persians, too, believed in a physical Resurrection. From Persia the doctrine passed into Palestine. It occupies a prominent place in Rabbinical literature. The Christian Teachers took it from the Rabbis; the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages took it from the Fathers; and so, century after century, it was transmitted from one set of theologians to another, till, even to-day, a good many people imagine that it is a Christian doctrine.

But it is not. The Bible, so far from teaching it, most emphatically denies it. There is, indeed, one passage in the Old Testament, in which it seems to be asserted; but that is a mistranslation. According to the Authorised Version Job declared, "With my flesh I shall see God"; but in reality he said nothing of the kind. He said just the opposite. It should have been translated, "Without my flesh I shall see God." There is not a single text that speaks of the resurrection of the flesh. The Bible does not even speak of the Resurrection of the body; and if we use the phrase, we must always remember that the reference is to the spiritual and not to the physical body. The Scripture expressions are "the resurrection of the dead," or "the resurrection of them that slept." St. Paul, in that famous chapter of his—the 15th of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians—does not hesitate to call the man a fool who looks for a physical Resurrection. "Thou fool," he says, "thou sowest NOT that body that shall be."

And apart altogether from the fact that it is unscriptural, there is another objection to the theory of a physical Resurrection—it is intrinsically absurd. Let me tell you some of the things that have been said about it by its defenders.

The Rabbinical theologians talked a great deal of a small almond-shaped bone in the human body, which they called *Lux*. It was

probably the *os coccyx* of modern anatomists. Well, this bone they declared to be absolutely indestructible. You might pound it on anvils with hammers of steel, you might burn it for centuries in the fiercest furnace, you might soak it for ages in the strongest solvent—all in vain. Nothing would destroy it ; for it was intended to be the nucleus around which our flesh could gather on the Resurrection morn. But I need hardly say, there is no such thing in existence as an indestructible bone. Tertullian regarded the teeth as the seeds of the Resurrection body ; and he thought—to serve that purpose—they had been providentially made eternal. You and I must have fallen on degenerate times. If immortal life depended on the eternity of our teeth, some of us would stand but a poor chance. St. Augustine mentioned that our bodies would be restored in the Resurrection perfect both in quality and quantity. Even the hairs which we shaved, he said, even the nails which we cut, would return to us. A pretty figure we should cut if they did ! When you have a few minutes to spare, take down the ponderous tomes of the Schoolmen from their neglected shelves, and you will find chapter after chapter occupied with grave discussions of questions like the following : When men's bodies are raised, will each one instinctively recognize his own, or will God distribute them as they belong ? Will our hairs and nails, as St. Augustine supposed, really be restored to us ? Will the deformities and scars of the present bodies be retained ? If we unfortunately grow fat, will our ill-luck follow us throughout eternity ? If we should die of a wasting disease, must we flit about for ever as thin as laths ? Or will men's bodies all be reduced to one stock size ? And so on, and so on, and so on. Hundreds and thousands of such silly questions they asked, and spent their lives in trying to answer.

It has often been said that a physical Resurrection is necessary to complete the punishment of sin. The Rabbis put the matter thus—In the day of Judgment the body will say, "The soul alone is to blame ; since it left me I have lain in the grave like a stone." The soul will retort, "The body alone is guilty ; since released, I fly through the air like a bird." But the Judge will interpose with this allegory : A King once had a beautiful garden full of fruits. A lame man and a blind man came to it. Said the lame man to the blind man, "Let me mount on your shoulders and pluck the fruit, and we will divide it." The King accused them both of theft, whereupon the lame man replied, "How could I reach it ?" and the blind man, "How could I see it ? But the King ordered the lame man to be placed on the back of the blind man, and in this position had them both whipped. So God in the day of Judgment will replace the soul in the body and hurl them both into hell.¹

¹ The theologians have always exerted themselves to explain how God could inflict enough pain, and wreak enough vengeance.

The Council of Trent adopted the same view. In its Catechism it asserted that, as the body had been a partner in man's sin, so it must become a partner in his punishment. What nonsense! You might as well maintain that the pistol or the knife of a murderer shall be hanged! The pistol, the knife, are but tools; and the same is true of bones and muscles, of eyes and hands. They are not agents, responsible agents. They can do no wrong. They can, of themselves, do nothing. The body is but the passive *instrument* of the soul.

Besides—and here we come to the crowning absurdity involved in the theory of a physical Resurrection—we have many bodies. Our organisms are constantly changing. Life is a process of waste and renewal. Every few years each of us—so far as his physical frame is concerned—becomes a perfectly new man. If we die at the age of seventy, we shall have had at least ten bodies. And not only does the same man have many different bodies, but the same bodies—or at all events the particles of which they are composed—belong at various times to many different men. There are only a small number of substances that can enter into the composition of the human frame. The elements of nutrition are comparatively limited, and therefore they must be utilized by successive generations. When we die our bodies are dissolved into their constituent molecules. These molecules enter into combination with water and air and earth and gas, and are finally absorbed anew into human organisms. The particles of matter which made up the body of Adam must have already run the circuit of ten thousand of his descendants. Just as money passes from hand to hand, so bodies—or at any rate their component elements—pass from soul to soul.

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.

If the Resurrection were a physical affair, there would not be matter enough to go round.

All difficulties and objections, however, are sometimes supposed to be got rid of by the assertion that everything is possible with God. Well, in regard to this assertion, I remark—

1. Even if true, it is irrelevant. That God *could* do a thing is no proof whatever that He will. He could restore the ashes of all the fuel ever consumed to its original state of coal deposit; but does it follow, therefore, that He will? He could give us wings and the necessary breathing apparatus, so that we might fly about among the planets and the stars, but we have no grounds for believing that He will. In order to discover His intentions about the Resurrection or anything else, we must inquire not only what *could* be done by POWER, but what *would* be done by WISDOM. In other words, we must use our reason, if we have any—our common-sense.

2. I observe, the assertion is not true. It sounds religious, but in

reality it is blasphemous. We should say of a fellow-creature in whom we had supreme confidence, that he was *incapable* of doing a foolish thing; and shall we say less of God? Now, listen to Young's description of the Day of Judgment—

Now charnels rattle; scattered limbs and all
The various bones, obsequious to the call,
Self-moved, advance: the neck perhaps to meet
The distant feet; the distant head the feet.
Dreadful to view, see through the dusky sky
Fragments of bodies, in confusion, fly
To distant regions journeying, there to claim
Deserted members, and complete the frame.

That is what would happen in a physical Resurrection. Is it likely that God would inaugurate our entrance into the spiritual world by such a ghastly display of physical horrors? Assuredly not. It would be a transcendent act of folly. And to those who think little of the divine wisdom, and much of the divine power, I say point-blank, *He could not if He would*. The thing is impossible even for omnipotence. It is a contradiction in terms. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the spiritual Kingdom of God." To give a man a material body is to prevent him from entering into an immaterial sphere.

Let us, then, hear no more of the vulgar theory of the Resurrection of the flesh. Little as we can guess about the future, we may rest assured that God will do nothing unworthy of Himself. And so with our last expiring breath we may say calmly, hopefully, triumphantly—

To Him I yield my spirit, on Him I lay my load;
Fear ends with Death: beyond it I nothing see but God.

The Resurrection

II

THE *Resurrection*, as I shall try and show you, is a rising *not of, but from*, the flesh. Immortality is not the resumption of the physical body but the continuity of the spiritual life.

We are all, perhaps without knowing it, inclined to be materialists. We are apt to look upon the soul as something essentially unreal, as a sort of *ghost*, whose very existence it would be difficult to prove. That is rank materialism. If there *were* any difficulty, its existence could never be proved at all. It is its own proof. "I am conscious, therefore I am." That is the only proof there is for it. And so far from being difficult, it is the simplest of truths. We say a man has a soul. That, again, is rank materialism. He has a great many things—a body among the rest. But he *has not* a soul. That is not a thing he possesses. It is his very self. He *is* a soul. He is a being who feels and sees and hears and thinks and remembers, and acts and

communicates with other beings. It is not the body that does these things. The body is only *an instrument* by which the soul is enabled to do them. When a man dies, we say his soul has left him. That is another instance of rank materialism. His soul has not left him. How could it? It is he, and he is it. The friends of Socrates, just before his death, were talking about his funeral; and he said to them in his quaint way, "Oh yes, you may bury me, *if* you can catch me." The *me* cannot be caught, cannot be buried. You may do what you like with the body and other possessions of him whom you call dead. But *he* has gone.

If you understand this, you will understand the Resurrection—so far as it can be understood on this side the Veil. Death and Resurrection are but different aspects of the same event. The dissolution of the body is the natural side of it, which takes place in this world, and which therefore we can see. Resurrection is the supernatural side of the event. It is the entrance of the departed into a realm which lies beyond our ken. In one word—Death *is* Resurrection.

Such was the view of Christ. How did He reply to the Sadducees, who said there was no Resurrection? He quoted the passage, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," and He added, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." God cannot be said to be the God of that which does not exist; for example, to say Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were *not* dead, had never actually died. Their apparent death had been their real Resurrection. And, you remember, to the penitent thief He said, "*This day* thou shalt be raised with Me to Paradise."

Such was also the view of St. Paul. In that great chapter of his, to which I referred last Sunday, he says, "The body of flesh and blood that is buried cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." And in order to make this plain he uses an illustration. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. Thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, to every seed its own body. So is the Resurrection of the dead. There are *terrestrial* bodies; and there are also bodies *celestial*. What is sown a *natural* body is raised a *spiritual* body. As we have borne the image of the *earthly*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*." In other words—when a grain of wheat is sown, it dies; it disappears as a grain of wheat and reappears as a blade of corn. The living power latent within the seed causes it to develop, and to assume a new body appropriate to its new surroundings. Similarly in the case of a human being, the germ that is destined to Immortality is not the corpse but the soul. When a man dies he has done with his old body. For the Kingdom of God a very different body will be required.

No doubt, as St. Paul says, there *is* a spiritual body.

Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside.

About that I may speak another time when we come to the problem of reunion and recognition. Suffice it for the moment to say, the spiritual body must be adapted to the requirements of the spiritual world ; it cannot be composed of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, with a dash of phosphorus and iron.

Further, all that we can discover of the methods of God, all the analogies of Nature, point to the same conclusion. St. Paul's illustration is but one of millions. Every plant, every animal, attains its perfection by distinct stages of development. In the lower stages preparation is always made for the higher ; and when the higher is reached, the means that led to it become an encumbrance and are consequently discarded. This is a universal law. All organized beings exemplify it. But perhaps the most *suggestive* example is a bird in the egg, just before it bursts its prison bars and escapes into the air. Look at an unfledged sparrow. There you find a being organized, as it would seem, quite out of keeping with its conditions. It has wings, but it cannot fly ; it has eyes, but it cannot see ; it has lungs, but it cannot breathe ; it has a throat to sing with, but it cannot sing. Let us imagine this infant sparrow to be thoughtfully inclined, and pre-disposed to argument and pessimism. In that case he might say—"There is nothing here to content me ; but I know of nothing beyond. How should a poor sparrow know of anything outside his own experience ? This shell is the boundary of my universe. If it were to break, I might fall to pieces and be dispersed among the elements." But we could teach him better than that. Why, he was created *on purpose* to burst his shell. So far from being his destruction, the apparent catastrophe is the making of him. And what we could teach the sparrow, shall we not teach ourselves ? As a bird is prepared for the air by a prior existence in the shell, so man is trained for the spiritual realm by a prior existence in the physical. As the organism of a bird points, while yet unused, to a time when it will become available, so man's longings and aspirations, never realized here, are prophetic of that hereafter where they will be realized. And finally, as a bird cannot begin the higher life till it has broken through the trammels of the lower, so man cannot enter heaven till he has left behind him what belongs essentially to earth.

Our mental faculties are limited and restrained by our material bodies. The infant feels this in learning to walk. His foot will not take him to the desired spot ; his hand will not grasp the glittering bauble. And even when he has grown up and reached his prime, the feeling of impotency remains. He would mount with the eagle ; he would fly with the wind ; he would explore the universe to gratify his boundless curiosity, his insatiable ambition. But the body will not

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let him. Just think what a large proportion of human inventions are intended merely to counteract the inertia (the dead weight) of our physical frame—the steamboat, for example, the railway, the telegraph. Yet, in spite of them all, we are as far as ever from the attainment of our desires, especially our best desires. The nobler a man is, the more he chafes under the entanglements of the flesh. *Listen!* “In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this *body of death*?” No doubt the resistance, the restraints, the temptations of the flesh are necessary. They stimulate our energies, they teach us self-mastery, and in many other ways they assist in the development of the soul. But by-and-by the end will be accomplished, and the means to it will no longer be required. I would as soon believe in the immortality of my pince-nez as in the immortality of my body—*sooner*. This little instrument has been invariably helpful to me, but I cannot say as much for the other. And to be ready for the spiritual sphere is to be past the need of physical organs. A material body would be worse than useless—it would be fatal. Always to some extent a hindrance, it would *then* be *nothing else*. To give it us again in the higher world would be simply to drag us back to the lower. And is man the only thing that shall retrograde? The butterfly never resumes the body it discarded as a caterpillar. The bird never shackles itself with its broken eggshell. Everything in Nature moves forward. The law of the universe is progress—not descent but ascent, not return but advance, not bodily resurrection but bodily emancipation.

Some weeks ago I spoke to you about the benignity of death. Now you see, I hope, that it is not only benignant but sublime. The dissolution of the body is the resurrection of the soul. Physical death is spiritual birth. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. This idea is finely expressed in a little poem by Caroline Southey, with which I will conclude—

Tread softly! bow the head—
In reverent silence bow!
No passing bell doth toll;
Yet an immortal soul
Is passing now.

Stranger, however great,
With lowly reverence bow!
There's one in that poor shed—
One in that paltry bed—
Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,
Lo! Death doth keep his state!
Enter!—no crowds attend;
Enter!—no guards defend
This palace gate.

The pavement, damp and cold,
No smiling courtiers tread;

One silent woman stands,
Lifting with meagre hands
A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—
An infant wail alone;
A sob suppressed—again
That short deep gasp—and then
The parting groan!

Oh! change—oh! wondrous change!
Burst are the prison bars!
This moment there, so low,
So agonized—and now
Beyond the stars!

Oh! change—stupendous change!
There lies the soulless clod!
The sun eternal breaks;
The new immortal wakes—
Wakes with his God.

Substitutes for Immortality

VOLTAIRE once remarked that if there were no God, it would be necessary to create one. By which, I suppose, he meant that the idea of God is essential to the perfecting of human life. Similarly, though not put explicitly into words, it has often been said *in effect* that if there were no real Immortality, it would be necessary to invent an imaginary one.

The spectre of eternal oblivion oppresses the heart with sadness and dismay. In their recoil from the dreary prospect that is opened up by the denial of a future life, men seek to solace themselves with some substitute or other, the worthlessness of which they attempt to conceal by giving it the old sweet name—Immortality.

The term really means the continuity of the individual life. But those who deny such continuity are accustomed to affirm that something as good or better may take its place. Let us look at these substitutes for Immortality. Most of them are the outcome of Atheism or Materialism. But there is one—and this I will notice first—which has been advocated by men like Amiel and Hinton, who were remarkable for religious fervour. *Their* substitute is absorption into God. We should be content, they say—more than content—to survive in Him. That is the highest form of Immortality, for—this is their argument—the loss of individuality would really be a gain. It is self which keeps us from God, and therefore we can only be united to Him by the destruction or absorption of self. This may appear plausible. But it derives its plausibility from an ambiguous use of language. You know, of course, that an argument is only sound when the same terms are used throughout in the same sense. But here one of them—the term self—is used in two senses. If we say it is self which keeps us from God, we are thinking of the lower impulses in our nature, which are sometimes out of harmony with the higher. But the higher impulses are *ours* just as much as the lower. It is only because they *both* belong to us that we experience the connexion between them. And therefore the higher impulses have at least as much right to the title as self. Now, in this sense of the term, when it stands for the higher impulses, self does not keep us from God. On the contrary, among *these* impulses of the self is one that prompts us to seek for Him. So you see the antagonism to be overcome is not between self and God, but between the lower and the higher self. Take an illustration. Take the case of two lovers. Does their sense of individuality keep them apart? Why, it is that which pre-eminently binds them together; for each of them, in being aware of his own individuality, becomes also aware of the fact that it is only completed by the individuality of the other. If there were nothing beyond the grave but unconsciousness, so far from being more closely united

by death, they would be absolutely and for ever separated. An individuality, personal identity, selfhood, is just as essential to Religion as to Love. The loss of individuality would be the loss of consciousness; and the loss of consciousness would be the loss of everything. The cessation of consciousness would be *for us* the cessation of God. To be absorbed into the Deity is to be extinguished in Him.

That is the theistic substitute for Immortality. Now, let us look at the atheistic substitute—or rather substitutes. To begin with, there is the idea of absorption *into the universe*. We must identify ourselves, we are told, with the whole scheme of things. We must lose the thought of our particular evanescence in the thought of the universal permanence. We are inseparable from the totality of being; and in its enduring phenomena we shall have our eternal portion. The particles of matter of which we are composed will mingle with earth and air and sea and sky, and live immortally in their ever-changing but never-dying life.

If Death seems hanging o'er thy separate Soul,
Discern thyself a part of Life's great Whole.

That sounds very well. *But think*. If life is always dying out and death alone persists, the line should run—

Discern thyself a part of *Death's* great Whole.

And that does not sound at all well. In vain do the materialists try to dazzle us with an infinite panorama of eternally whirling suns. Apart from immortality, what are they but eternally whirling sepulchres? Is the sorrowing human heart to be comforted by the eternity of a universe *like that*? Better far if it were not eternal. Best of all if it had never been.

Then there is another thing which we are sometimes assured would make an excellent substitute for Immortality¹—viz., Absorption into the race. It may be regarded either from the selfish or from the unselfish point of view. The selfish theory is this. The great man, it is said, will survive in the memory of his fellows. He will have an *Immortality of fame*. “‘Be of good cheer, brother,’ said John Bradford to his fellow-martyrs while the faggots were kindling; ‘we shall be in heaven with the Lord to-night.’ ‘Be of good cheer, everybody,’ cry the army of modern prophets; ‘there is no Heaven and no Lord, and death will be the end of us; but the generations that come after will be greatly edified by our beautiful books and our instructive examples.’” You remember—

When all the breathers of our time are dead
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes—e'en in the mouths of men.

Napoleon is reported to have said—“My soul will pass into history

¹ Things are not always what they sound.

and the deathless memories of mankind, and thus in glory I shall be immortal." This notion forms the essence of Comte's doctrine of a future life, and he himself was very much pleased with it. He declared that Positivism had greatly improved Immortality and placed it on a firmer foundation. If this were true, it would only concern a few scores, or at most a few hundreds, of the race. What is to become of those who have written no beautiful books and left no great examples? But the theory is false—absurdly false—even in the case of geniuses. Of fame it has been well observed, that though losing it is hell, nevertheless keeping it is purgatory. And if fame will not pay a man for his toil, it certainly will not pay him for his extinction. That proud and gifted natures should have stooped to console themselves with such a toy is as strange as it is pathetic.

I pass on to notice the unselfish theory of absorption into the race—the *lampada tradunt* theory of Immortality. We are pointed out the fact that generations succeed each other. Life is for ever passing into new subjects. It is a process of constant renovation, and its ovum is always full. Men are the immortal cells of immortal humanity. There is an unending creation of different organisms. The individual must comfort himself with the sympathetic reflection that his extinction destroys nothing, since all the elements of his being will be manipulated into the forms of his successors. He must content himself with the Immortality of the race. It must suffice him to survive in the lives of others. We cannot but feel a tender pity for those whose loving natures, baffled of any solid resource, turn appealingly, ere they fade away, to clasp this empty shadow. What consolation is it to think that others will live after us, if they are to be annihilated too? The immortality of the race, apart from the immortality of the individual, is a contradiction in terms. How can the race be immortal if all its members are mortal? You say, perhaps—Immortality may be attained in the far-off future by some of those into whom our lives are absorbed. I reply—They have no right to eternal life purchased at the cost of our eternal death. And even allowing, for the sake of argument, that they had a right to it, our absorption into them is not survival but extinction. You may call it what you please, but it is extinction none the less. Why, if I were actually resigned to it, I should be as far as ever from mistaking it for Immortality. I will not be deceived by any jugglery of terms. I will not be imposed upon by the mere jangle of a sound.

If doomed indeed, this fever ceased,
To die out slowly like a beast,
Forgetting all life's ill-success
In dark and peaceful nothingness,
I could but say, "Thy will be done";
For dying thus I were but one
Of countless million seeds which ne'er
In all the worlds shall bloom or bear.

IMMORTALITY

I've put life past to such poor use,
 Well mayst Thou life to come refuse;
 And justice, which the soul contents,
 Shall still in me all vain laments;
 Nay, pleased I will, while yet I live,
 Think Thou my forfeit life mayst give
 To some fresh life, else unelect,
 And heaven not feel my poor defect.
Only let not Thy method be
To make that life and call it ME.

That would be mockery indeed. So, you see, the substitutes for Immortality will not bear a moment's investigation. You may as well get rid of light and expect anything but darkness, as deny Immortality and look for anything but despair.

The Longing for Rest

My subject this morning is the Longing for Rest. I have throughout assumed that the desire for Immortality is natural to man; and so, as a rule, it is. But there are exceptions. We sometimes meet with persons who declare that the prospect of living again has no attraction for them. "Rest," they say; "that is all we want. Give us rest and we shall be content." On Professor Huxley's tomb are engraved the words, "God giveth His beloved sleep; and if an endless sleep He wills—'tis best." Borrow relates that he once heard a gipsy exclaim—"What! is it not enough to have borne the wretchedness of one life, but we must also endure another?" James Thomson, the most tragic of the poets of Pessimism, speaks, you remember, "of the restful rapture of the inviolate grave." And just listen to these two verses of his—the one on the Rest of Death and the other on the Rest of Oblivion—

Weary of erring in this desert life,
 Weary of hoping hopes for ever vain,
 Weary of struggling in all the sterile strife,
 Weary of thought that maketh nothing plain,
 I close my eyes and calm my panting breath
 And pray for thee, divinely tranquil Death!
 To come and soothe away my bitter pain.

The other verse is entitled "To our Lady of Oblivion"—

The weak, the weary, and the desolate,
 The poor, the mean, the outcast, the oppressed,
 All trodden down beneath the march of Fate,
 Thou gatherest, loving Sister, to thy breast,
 Soothing their pain and weariness with sleep;
 Then, in thy hidden dreamland, hushed and deep,
 Dost lay them shrouded in eternal rest.

This longing for the rest of unconsciousness is intensified, of course, by the belief in transmigration, which is almost universal in the East, and which is not uncommon now among ourselves. If the thought

of another life is burdensome, much more burdensome will be the thought of an endless series of lives. To a spirit already jaded the prospect of incessantly *moving on* is appalling. It pines for a goal of rest. Exhausted with wanderings, sated with experiences, it prays for the fruition of repose. One must weary at last, it has been finely said—one must weary at last of being even so sublime a vagabond as he whose mighty hostelries are stars. Besides, how will sundered friends and lovers, between whom on the road of existence races and worlds are interposed—how will they ever overtake each other? How can they journey again hand in hand and build a bower together by the way? The Hindus, oppressed by this theory of transmigration, harassed by a sense of the inevitable limitations and sufferings of the finite form of being, long, not for Immortality, but for extinction. It is their dearest hope that eventually they will escape from the torture-chamber of personality, and merge into the peaceful *Impersonality* of the Infinite. Among all the great nations of the East this has been at once a metaphysical speculation, a poetic dream, and a common passionate desire. Let me read you what John Stuart Mill says about it in his essay on the Utility of Religion. "Buddhism proposes, as the supreme reward for the highest virtue, annihilation—a cessation, at least, of all consciousness or separate individual existence. Oriental legislators and moralists, in their endeavour to supply supernatural motives for the conduct which they were anxious to encourage, could find nothing more transcendent to hold out as the prize, to be won by the mightiest efforts of labour and self-denial, than what we are often told is the terrible idea of annihilation. Surely," he says, "this is a proof that the idea is not really or naturally terrible, that not philosophers only, but the common order of mankind can easily reconcile themselves to it, and even consider it as a good; and that it is no unnatural part of the idea of a happy life, that life itself should be laid down, after the best it can give has been fully enjoyed through a long lapse of time; when all its pleasures, even those of benevolence, are familiar, and nothing untasted or unknown is left to stimulate curiosity, and keep up the desire for prolonged existence. It seems to me," continues Mill, "not only possible but probable that in a higher and, above all, a happier condition of human life, not annihilation but Immortality may be the burdensome idea; and that human nature, though pleased with the present and by no means anxious to quit it, will find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to conscious existence, which it cannot be assured that it will always wish to retain."

One of the arguments for eternal life is the fact that most men desire it; and it must be admitted, this argument is to a certain extent weakened by the fact that some men desire extinction. If, it may be

asked—if the desire for Immortality carries with it, by implication, the promise of its own fulfilment, should not the desire for extinction be regarded as equally prophetic? *No.* For this reason. The desire for extinction is exceptional. The purpose of existence can only be discovered in what is normal. But the pessimistic mood is abnormal—abnormal as blindness or insanity. The *vast majority* of us regard the cessation of life as an evil, and therefore we are forced to the conclusion that men were not made for death. Even in India the hatred of life was for a long time conspicuously absent. It only arose after the Hindus had left the temperate climate of their early home and descended into the sultry valley of the Ganges. Their subsequent Pessimism may have been caused, partly by the extreme poverty of the masses of the people, partly by the miseries involved in the system of caste;¹ but there can be no doubt that it was especially fostered by the oppressive heat, to which the new settlers were unaccustomed, and which sapped their physical vitality. It is true, world-weariness, *Weltschmerz*, the longing to escape from life, is not unknown in Europe. But in temperate climes there are few permanent Pessimists. To the average man life is worth living. Though not all he could wish, he would, nevertheless, be sorry to lose it. He finds pleasure in the exertion of his faculties—in breathing, moving, thinking, working. Sleep is welcome to him, but chiefly because he awakes refreshed. Rest is agreeable to him, but chiefly as a preparation for activity. Of course, if he is more than usually tired, sleep will be more than usually welcome. And if his body has been debilitated by climate or disease, if his mind has been abnormally strained and harassed, rest will acquire an abnormal fascination; it will even perhaps to him appear to be the one sole boon of Heaven. *But*—all the rest we need may come to us as we die into another life. Christ thought and taught that it would. He gave us, instead of death, the sweet word sleep—sleep that removes for a time all worry and care, that links day to day and shuts out the gloom of darkness, that refills the exhausted lamp of life, that begins in weariness and ends in strength, that not only soothes but stimulates us. If He had done nothing more than this, Christ would have been the greatest of benefactors. It was a Revelation. It was as if He had said—Death is not what it seems. It is not, on the one hand, a horrible thing—a matter of corruption; nor, on the other hand, is it a transition to the placid unconsciousness of non-existence. It is *re-creation*. Death does for the soul what sleep does for the body—*rests, restores, invigorates*, RE-CREATES it, for a fuller life on a brighter and happier morrow.

¹ There is no trace of it in the Vedas.

Old Testament Idea of the Future Life

THE Jews originally had not a notion of Immortality. They believed in a world of glory above the firmament, where Jehovah and the angels dwelt, but they never anticipated that men would be allowed into it.

There are, no doubt, a few passages in the Old Testament in which the doctrine of Immortality is taught. There are three in the Psalms—xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." xlix. 15: "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me." lxxiii. 24: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." There is one in Hosea, xiii. 14: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." There is another in the Book of Daniel, xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Finally, there is the great passage in the Book of Job, beginning, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." But unfortunately our Authorised Version is erroneous and misleading. The reference is not to a Redeemer, but to an Avenger. And by an avenger is meant a near relative of a deceased person, whose business it was to take cognisance of any wrongs that had been inflicted on his departed kinsman. God, says Job, who seems now to have forsaken me, will by-and-by take my part. "I know that my Avenger liveth. After worms have destroyed my body, I shall yet see Him, when He comes to vindicate my character."

Now, if we are to accept the dates which we find in the margins of our Bibles, these passages would prove that the doctrine of Immortality formed part of the original Religion of the Jews, or at any rate that it had been distinctly taught by some of their early poets and prophets. But, these dates are always wrong. As a matter of fact, a good deal of the Old Testament is a thousand or twelve hundred years more modern than was formerly supposed. This is the case with most of the texts just quoted. They were not written till a century, or a century and a half, B.C., by which time the Jews, in consequence of their intercourse with the Persians, had learnt to believe in Immortality. The Book of Job was composed much earlier, and I am myself inclined to think that the magnificent Soliloquy about the Avenger belonged to it from the beginning. With this view, however, the majority of the ablest critics do not agree. They regard it as a late interpolation. But even if I am right, the passage in question

was the result of special insight and inspiration. It neither reflected nor influenced the popular belief.

From that popular belief the doctrine of Immortality is conspicuously absent—often, to us, startlingly absent. For example, Lev. xxvi. : “If ye keep My commandments, I will give you rain in due season ; your land shall yield its increase, and ye shall eat your bread to the full ; I will rid evil beasts out of the land, and your enemies shall fall before your sword ;” and so on and so on. “But if ye will not keep My commandments, ye shall sow your seed in vain, ye shall be killed by your enemies ; I will afflict you with pestilence and with burning ague that shall consume your eyes ; I will send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your cattle and destroy your children,” and so on and so on. There is not the slightest allusion to the consequences of conduct in a world beyond the grave. Even a prophet like Isaiah, who loved to describe the future reign of Righteousness, never spoke of the personal survival of the righteous. When the sceptics of those days pointed to the fact that the righteous were sometimes in adversity, and maintained that it was therefore of no use to serve the Lord, what did the orthodox reply ? Did they speak of compensation in heaven ? Not at all. They declared that matters would be presently adjusted on earth. Physical suffering—carried in extreme cases to the sudden extinction of life—was the punishment of sin. The happy prolongation of life was the reward of virtue. “The wicked shall not live out half his days ; but because Thou hast made the Lord thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, and with long life shall He satisfy thee.” Such is the burden of the Old Testament. Look, for instance, at the 37th Psalm : “Fret not thyself because of evil-doers ; for evil-doers shall be cut off. Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shalt exalt thee to inherit the earth. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not. Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright : *he* shall end his days in peace.” Eventually the same fate was in store for all men. Only the righteous met it in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe, while the wicked were hurried away by a terrible and untimely catastrophe.

I will now proceed to explain to you precisely what it was, according to the Hebrew theologians, that happened in death. They distinguished, you must know, between the soul and the spirit. By the soul they understood the animal life, the power of vitality. The spirit was a comprehensive name for the mental faculties, and this they regarded as an emanation from the Deity. When a man died, his spirit, they thought, was reabsorbed into God, and his soul went to what they call Sheol. Oddly enough, this word is translated in our Authorised Version 31 times *hell*, and 31 times *grave*. And,

sadly enough, it is 62 times (yes, twice 31 are 62)—62 times translated *wrongly*. It signifies neither hell nor grave. Not hell, for the Hebrews had no idea that there was such a place. True, it is said in one of the Psalms (ix. 17), "The wicked shall be turned into Sheol, and all the nations which forget God." But this only means *prematurely*. Everybody was supposed to be turned into it, sooner or later. We are told in another psalm (lxxxix. 48) that "no man could deliver his soul from Sheol."

It was not a place of punishment, but a common receptacle for good and bad alike. Nor did Sheol signify the grave, for that the Hebrews designated by another word. Besides, whatever became of a dead man's body—even when it was buried far away from his family and friends—they always said that *he* had been gathered to his people and slept with his fathers. Sheol, then, was the gathering-place where the souls of the departed slept—not the refreshing sleep with which, as we now believe, Death prepares us for another life, but the heavy, fatal sleep from which there is no awakening. The Hebrew word for disembodied souls is Rephaim, which means etymologically weak or relaxed. The inhabitant of Sheol was a mere shadow or ghost, the very emblem of helplessness and impotence. "I am counted," says a psalmist (lxxxviii. 4), "as one of those that go down into Sheol; I am as a man that hath no strength." Occasionally the slumbering shades might be summoned for a few moments to the light of day by a necromancer like the witch of Endor; but otherwise they could have no intercourse either with earth or heaven. As for heaven, God left the dead to their fate. "This God," says one of the psalmists, "is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death." *Unto death*. But there the guidance of Jehovah ceased. "My soul is full of trouble," says another. "I am like them in Sheol whom Thou rememberest not." "They shall lie down in Sheol," says a third, "and death shall feed them." Those who had once been God's sheep were now handed over to another shepherd. Sheol was outside the dominion of Jehovah; the King of Terrors was its only Lord. The Hebrews pictured it to themselves as a vast cavern deep down in the interior of the earth, a land of silence and of gloom, where, as Job put it, the very light was as darkness. In this dreary under world the departed soul continued, in a sense, to exist; but without feeling, without reason, without will, without any of its old faculties, except a bare consciousness of existence, such as may belong to us in dreams—a life not far removed from annihilation. The Jews called it being no more; and Sheol they designated the land of forgetfulness.

It was a land of shadows; yea, the land
Itself was but a shadow; and the race
That dwelt there were but voices, forms of forms,
And echoes of themselves.

There, no doubt, the wicked ceased from troubling and the weary were at rest. In extreme anguish men might look forward to Sheol as a relief ; but the *normal* human heart inevitably shrinks from the thought of being consigned for ever to silence, darkness and dreams. No wonder, then, that the Hebrews generally regarded Death as the supreme evil. The Book of Ecclesiastes concludes thus—"The spirit shall return to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities ; *all* is vanity." In other words, the return of the spirit to God was the last and worst and silliest catastrophe in the wretched drama of human life. True, the man who said that was a sceptical and cynical voluptuary ; but his mournful exclamation found an echo sometimes in the hearts of pious psalmists and inspired prophets. "Who," asks one of them, "can deliver his soul from Sheol ? Why hast Thou made all men in vain ?" Apart from Immortality, they have been made in vain. If the future has nothing in store for us but the Land of Forgetfulness, Creation is a blunder ; man, God, ALL is Vanity.

The Greek Idea of the Future Life

LAST Sunday I discussed the *Hebrew* idea of the future life. I pointed out to you that there are only five or six passages in the Old Testament which make any reference to Immortality, and that most, if not all, of them were written as late as 100 or 150 years before Christ. Up to that time the Jews had been accustomed to think that when a man died his soul went to Sheol, which is translated in our Authorised Version sometimes grave and sometimes hell. It was neither the one nor the other. It was the meeting-place of disembodied souls—good and bad alike. The Hebrews pictured it as a vast cavern in the interior of the earth—a land of silence and of gloom—where, as Job put it, the very light was as darkness. In this dreary under-world the departed soul continued, in a sense, to exist, but without feeling, without reason, without will, without any of its old faculties except the bare consciousness of existence, such as belongs to us in dreams—a life not far removed from annihilation. The Jews called it being no more, and Sheol they spoke of as the land of Forgetfulness.

The early Greek idea of the future life was very similar. Hades, like Sheol, was the dwelling-place of disembodied souls ; and, like Sheol, it was pictured as a subterranean world wrapped in eternal gloom. The soul, exhaled with the dying breath, was supposed to be material, but of such a thin and subtle contexture that it could not be felt by the hand or even transfixed by the sword. It glided along noiselessly like a shadow. It preserved the shape and lineaments of the body, and even the marks of wounds if a man died in battle ; so it was im-

mediately recognized on its appearance in the under-world. In the play of *Sophocles* the dying Antigone exclaims, "I hope to be welcomed by my mother and my father and my brother." The inhabitants of Hades were somewhat more alive than those of Sheol. Companies of fellow-countrymen, knots of friends, talked together of their earthly fortunes, and eagerly questioned each new arrival for tidings from above. Homer tells us that when the soul of Achilles heard of the glorious deeds of his son Neoptolemus, he walked about excitedly, taking mighty steps through the meadows of asphodel. Still, in spite of occasional gleams of comfort, the future life was dreary, uninviting, repellent. The shade of this same Achilles—the princeliest of heroes—declared he would rather serve on earth for *hire* than be ruler over all the dead.

To the ancient Greek, as to the ancient Hebrew, death was a deplorable doom. Hades he regarded as the natural destiny, the inevitable fate of universal humanity. But he could not reconcile himself to it. When a friend departed to the dolorous realm he sighed a *melancholy, hopeless* farewell. When his own summons came, he cast a sad, fond look at the bright day and the green earth. To his dying vision there was indeed a future, but what a future! To leave the glory and the joy of life, and subside into the dark, chill, mournful dwelling-place of ghosts. To become a vapid form, with nerveless limbs and a faint voice, a mere spectre, with just enough energy to bemoan its doom! No wonder that the living shrank from it—save as a refuge from the most intolerable afflictions.

Thus, you see, *originally* the Greeks and the Hebrews had pretty much the same conception of the future life. In course of time, however, this conception was modified and developed. The Jews, as I said the other day, did not learn to believe in Immortality—properly so called—until they had been brought into contact with the Persians. But the Greeks worked their way to the belief by themselves. That powerful instinct in man, which desires to see villainy punished and virtue rewarded, could scarcely have failed among such a cultivated people to suggest the thought of future retribution and compensation. And consequently, in writers subsequent to Homer, we find a portion of Hades set apart for the wicked. This was called Tartarus. At first only monsters of iniquity were consigned to it, like the Titans, who had attempted by piling up mountains to storm the heavens and dethrone the gods, or, like Sisyphus, Ixion, and Tantalus, who had personally offended Zeus and been condemned by his direct intervention. Presently the two flagrant sins of blasphemy and perjury, later still *all evil deeds*, were supposed to be expiated by future suffering. And just as the notion of the wrath of the gods gave rise to a belief in the woes of Tartarus, so the notion of the kindness of the gods gave rise to a belief in the joys of Elysium—the

future abode of the good. There the fields were clothed with perpetual green, fanned continually by a refreshing breeze, and perfumed with the delicate fragrance of flowers. In the beginning Elysium was thought of—Calvinistically—as the select abode of special favourites of heaven. To all but a chosen few this part of the underworld was utterly inaccessible. But by-and-by admission into it was declared to be obtainable by merit. The Greeks—to their undying glory, let it ever be remembered—the Greeks did what has not yet been completely accomplished even in Christendom. They eliminated from their idea of future punishment all traces of vindictiveness, and from their idea of future reward every element of caprice. They came eventually to believe that every human soul, on its entrance into Hades, would pass before Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Æacus—three upright judges—who would deal with it impartially according to its deserts and the immutable powers of Right.

And there were some who came to regard the future life as more than a continuation of the present—as an actual advance. There were some who learnt to think of death, not as an evil to be accepted with resignation, but rather as a boon to be looked forward to with hope. In that last matchless discourse which Socrates delivered to his disciples he said: “‘ Let a man be of good cheer about his soul, if only he has arrayed her in her proper jewels—in temperance and justice, and nobility and truth. Thus adorned she will be ready, when the hour comes, to start on her journey to the other world. And *there* she will dwell in mansions far fairer than these; it will be like going from captivity to home.’ With gentle irony the Master reproved them for the weakness of their faith. Simmias and Cebes demanded *more proof*. ‘ You are like children,’ he said to them, ‘ who are afraid in the dark. You seem to fancy that when the soul leaves the body, the wind may blow her away—especially if it should be a stormy night.’ And when Crito asked how he would be buried, he replied, ‘ Anyhow you like; only you must catch me first.’ Then he turned to the others and said: ‘ I have been trying to convince you that I am going to the joys of the blessed; but these words of mine, I perceive, have had no effect upon Crito. So you must be surety for me now, as he was surety for me at the trial, only let the promise be of a different sort: he went bail that I would remain, but you must guarantee that I shall go away. I do not want him to say, Thus we lay out Socrates, or, Thus we follow Socrates to the grave. For false words infect the soul with evil. My dear Crito, you *cannot* bury Socrates. As for his body, you may do with that what is usual, and what you think best.’ At last came the closing scene. The hour of sunset was near. The jailer entered and said to him, ‘ You know my errand, Socrates. Other men rage and swear at me when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison. But you, I am sure, will not be angry; you are too

just. Farewell! Try to bear lightly what must needs be.' After he had thus spoken he burst into tears and went out. 'How charming he is,' exclaimed Socrates; 'he has been very kind to me in the prison here, and you can see that his sorrow is genuine. Let the cup be brought.' 'But,' said Crito, 'the sun is yet upon the hill-tops, and many take the draught late. Do not hasten; there is still time.' Socrates replied, 'I should gain nothing by the delay. My life is already over. Please do as I wish.' So they called the jailer, who soon returned, carrying the cup. Socrates said to him with a smile, 'You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, must give me instructions as to how I am to proceed.' The man answered, 'You have only to walk about till your legs are heavy, and afterwards lie down.' Then he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it without the least hesitation, and without the slightest sign of fear. 'What do you say,' he inquired of the jailer, 'to my making a libation? May I or may I not?' He answered, 'We only prepare just enough.' 'I understand,' said Socrates, 'but I *must* beg the Deity to prosper my journey from this world to the other.—Even so; be it unto me according to my prayer.' With these words he put the cup to his lips and quite cheerfully drank off the poison. Hitherto"—the narrative, by the way, Plato puts into the mouth of Phædo, who was the Master's favourite, the beloved disciple—"hitherto most of us had been able to control ourselves; but when we saw that he had finished the draught, we could do so no longer. My tears were flowing fast; not for him, but for myself, at the thought of my own calamity in losing such a friend. Crito got up and moved away; and at that moment Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone remained calm. 'Be quiet,' he said, 'have patience.' He walked about a little and then lay on his back according to the directions. After a while the jailer pressed his foot and asked him if he could feel; he said 'No'; and then his leg, and so upwards, and upwards. Socrates felt them himself. 'When the poison reaches the heart,' he murmured, 'that will be the end.' And he wrapped his mantle about him. Presently he uncovered his face. 'Crito,' he said, 'I owe something to Asclepius.' 'The debt shall be paid,' answered Crito. 'Is there anything else?' No answer came."

There *was* nothing else. The greatest—with one exception—of all human beings had gone, murdered, to his reward in the Unseen.

Primitive Ideas of the Future Life

NEXT Sunday, and for some Sundays afterwards, I shall be engaged in discussing the modern idea of *Immortality*. We must consider the spiritual body, recognition, heaven, hell, final restoration, and so forth from the standpoint of present-day thinkers.

But before entering on these considerations, it is desirable to have a *general* notion as to the manner in which men have attempted to solve the problem in bygone ages and in distant countries. So, in addition to what I have already said on this branch of the subject, I will ask you to-day to glance at the savage idea of Immortality, or rather, I should say, of the future life. For, strictly speaking, Immortality implies an advance—especially a spiritual advance—upon our present state of existence. And this the primitive man was quite unable to conceive.

Still, as has been pointed out, it is a strange and startling fact that he should ever have thought of another life at all. The belief in something that lives after death is the most audacious imagination that could enter into a human mind. The very Dead body gives it—apparently—the lie. That which looked out of the eyes, that which shaped the air into speech, that which was felt in the grasp of the hand—these and a thousand other things have gone. It certainly seems as if all were over. Wonderful, passing wonderful, is it that any one should ever have inquired: "If a man die, shall he live again?" and yet the lowest savage has not only asked the question, but has always answered it in the affirmative. He has always believed there was something within him which death could not touch.

The idea was first suggested to him, in all probability, by the phenomena of sleep. He seemed to have an alter ego, a second self, which, while the body lay passive and inert, could shoot and fish, and hunt and fight, which could even depart altogether and pay visits to distant friends. It has been, at one time or other, universally believed that the soul does actually leave the body in dreams. There is a superstition prevailing to-day in some parts of Europe, according to which it is dangerous to turn a sleeper over lest the soul should miss its way back. And, in consonance with this kind of notion, the primitive man imagined that his other, his dream self, which in sleep left the body for a while, in death simply left it *for good*.

Hence, not unnaturally, he pictured the future life as exactly similar to the present. When he was away from the body in sleep, he did pretty much the same as in his waking moments; and this is what would happen, he fancied, when he was away from the body in death. To ensure, as far as in them lay, the similarity of the future to the

past was regarded by the dead man's relatives as their supreme duty. Such was the meaning of all the funeral ceremonies of early times. Among the Kayans of Borneo the slaves of a deceased person are killed in order that they may accompany him to the unseen world. They are strictly enjoined to take good care of their master, to shampoo him when he is ill, to be ever ready at his call, and always to obey his behests. From the same sort of motive the Fijians try to prevail upon the widow not to outlive her husband. All the pressure of persuasion and menace is brought to bear upon her. She knows well that if she refuse to die she will henceforth be disgraced ; and custom is as tyrannous, as hard to struggle against, in Fiji as it is in London.

When the King of Dahomey died, almost the whole of his Court was massacred, that they might attend him on his entrance into Dead-land—wives, eunuchs, ministers, soldiers. Nor is this all. From time to time he was supplied with a fresh body of ghostly followers. And when the new king—the son of the deceased—performed any important act of State, he killed some one, after having previously instructed him to report the action to his father. These murderous scenes are an expression, lamentably mistaken, but frequently sincere, of the liveliest filial piety. Other savages, less affectionately disposed, leave their dead relatives to shift for themselves. They seem content—more than content—to be quit of them. The custom of opening a window for the departing soul is even yet very common in France and Germany and England. And the North American Indians, afraid that the deceased may be inclined to linger, beat the air with sticks to frighten him away. A still more curious custom prevailed among the Australian aborigines. When a widow returned home from her husband's funeral she was attended by a person who flourished a handful of twigs like a fly-flapper. This functionary was engaged for the purpose of driving off the ghost of the defunct, and leaving her free to marry again.

Savages, moreover, have generally believed that *everything* had a ghost, and that if they buried or burnt a dead man's property, he would find it again in the future life. The horse and the dog, the weapons and the pipe of the Indian warrior, are laid in the grave beside him. Sometimes dogs have been buried with the dead for another reason. Among the Esquimaux and the Aztecs it was thought—*why*, I do not know—it was thought that the faithful animals would be able to guide their human companions to the land of souls. Some of the objects interred were pathetically suggestive. They were not always intended to make the next world *pleasant*. Among the Algonquin tribes, for instance, where the hard work is done by women, these hapless servitors are buried with the carrying-strap, the strap they used in carrying burdens, so that they might resume, beyond the grave, their everlasting toil.

Man's anticipations of the future, you see, have invariably been determined by his habits and surroundings in the present. Piteous, indeed, must have been the condition of those whose imagination lost all rebound, who thought of the next life as poorer and harder than this, and who expected in the land of spirits to be flogged by more cruel taskmasters than any to be found on earth. As a rule, however, men expected to be better off hereafter. The negroes, when first transported to Virginia, imagined that Death would restore them to their pristine freedom and to their native land. They believed it so firmly that hundreds of them, in their dire homesickness, committed suicide. With fiendish ingenuity the owners told them that they possessed estates in Africa as well, that the deserters would be caught as soon as they arrived, and that their work and their hardships would be doubled. The poor wretches took it all for gospel truth, and then they had nothing to hope for—not even from Death.

I need hardly say that when the savage looks forward to a better world, the good times he anticipates are not of an elevated character. How should they be? They are but a copy of the good times he has had on earth. Some there are so low down in the scale of being as to think that the future will be passed in perpetual drunkenness. To the Esquimaux the best thing in Paradise is the walrus-meat. The American Indian, as he sinks in battle, catches a glimpse of Happy Hunting-grounds, where there is eternal summer, where the woods troop with game, and where the arrows of the sportsmen never miss. The inhabitants of Kamtschatka are confident that they will find again, not only their wives, but also their clothes, and their huts and their tools, in a land where there are no bogs, no inundations, no impossible snows, no Cossacks, and where neither hunting nor fishing is ever pursued in vain. Heaven to them is but Kamtschatka improved. They do not fear any punishment for wrong-doing. The only rectification they expect is for the poor. Those who have had weak, thin dogs on earth will be furnished in heaven with strong, fat ones.

And when the idea of retribution does occur to men, they always begin by awarding the highest happiness to the virtue of physical courage. For example, in Scandinavia Odin's Hall is reserved exclusively for warriors. Einheriar, they are termed—i.e., the Elect.

Valhalla is roofed with shields, ornamented with coats of mail, and its columns are spears. Each morning at cock-crow the Elect rush forth and pass the day fighting; but however pierced, even though hewn in pieces in these terrible encounters, by evening every wound has healed, and they return to a magnificent banquet, where places of honour are assigned to those who have proved themselves the most valiant. A battle by day and a feast by night—the highest joys which the Vikings knew on earth—were supposed to be the supreme rewards of heaven.

Crude, grotesque, coarse enough, in all conscience, were the savage's opinions of the future life ; but not more so than *the rest* of his opinions. The race, like the individual, grows—grows from childhood to maturity. Men only get right by finding out they were wrong. We do not reach the truth till after centuries and millenniums of error. That is the divine plan.

For fresh and green, from the rotting roots
Of primal forests, the young growth shoots ;
From the death of the old the new proceeds,
And the life of truth from the rot of creeds.

What a contrast between the dying Cherokee, who would leap into heaven with a war-whoop on his tongue and a string of scalps in his hand, and the dying Christ, who sublimely murmured, " Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit ! " What a sweep of thought from the peasant woman who pictures heaven as a place where she and a few others will sit in clean aprons singing psalms, and the philosopher whose loving faith embraces every rank of being, and who conceives of Paradise as a land of eternal progress for all the inhabitants of all the worlds in space ! Yet great as is the contrast, wide as is the separation between the lowest ideas of Immortality and the highest, it is nevertheless true that the former were *inevitable* in the childhood of the race. Men could not possibly *begin* with *spiritual* conceptions. " That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." And among the myriad surmises about futurity which have obtained from age to age, there is not one but bears testimony to the existence in man of a divinely implanted intuition that everything is not ended for him at Death.

The Spiritual Body

I

'Some one will say, How are the dead raised up ? and with what body do they come ? Fool ! when thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain ; and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. So also is the Resurrection of the dead. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body.'—I CORINTHIANS XV.

LAST Sunday, you remember, I pointed out that the idea of a future life was most probably suggested, in the first instance, by the phenomena of sleep, and that all the improvement to which they looked forward was *material, physical, carnal*. And that was all.

Here, as in all early beliefs—and, for the matter of that, in late ones too—there is a mixture of truth and error. The savage was wrong in supposing that the soul left the body in sleep, but right in supposing

that it left the body in death. He was wrong in supposing that his experiences hereafter would be the same as his experiences here, but right in supposing that he would carry with him his own essential personality. He was wrong in supposing that his disembodied soul would be material, but right in supposing that it would possess a recognizable form. He was wrong in supposing that the ghosts of material objects would meet him beyond the grave, but right in supposing that it was impossible for any kind of ghost to regain its physical embodiment. He did not believe in the resuscitation of his flesh and blood. And in this respect he was in agreement with St. Paul.

There is nothing in the Bible, or anywhere else, *plainer, more unmistakable, more simple*, than St. Paul's denial of a physical Resurrection. The fact that many people have not seen this, that many people still do not see it, shows in what a thoughtless and perfunctory manner they must go through what I suppose they would call their devotional reading. They take up the Bible with their minds full of *preconceptions, prejudices, prejudgments*—prejudgments, you know, are judgments formed before the proper materials have been got together to form them with. Well, I say people take up the Bible when their minds are full of prejudgments, when they are, as we call it, prejudiced. Instead of going to the Bible to get materials for a judgment, they carry a ready-made judgment with them. They do not try and find out what it actually teaches. They content themselves with reading into it what they already believe. As is well said in Butler's *Hudibras*—

The Bible is the Book
Where each his dogma seeks,
And each his dogma finds.

The great chapter from which our text is taken has perhaps more than any other been subjected to this stupid—not to say disrespectful—treatment. It is often supposed to affirm—it is sometimes even quoted as affirming—that which it most emphatically denies. I want you, therefore, this morning to look carefully into the apostle's doctrine of the spiritual body. He compares the *sowing, death, and rising* of man to the *sowing, death, and rising* of grain. Even in nature, he says, in your ordinary agricultural processes, you do not sow the body that shall be. You sow bare grain. That grain remains in the earth; but there is a vital element within it which rises above the earth, and in doing so takes to itself—"God gives it"—a new body suited to its new conditions and its new environment.

Now this analogy deserves minute consideration. We are confronted at the outset by a difficulty; but a little reflection will suffice,

I think, to conquer it. The difficulty is this : What is meant by the sowing of man ? If we go wrong here we shall entirely miss the point of the analogy, and the whole chapter will be rendered meaningless. So let us be sure that we get the right answer to the question, *When, where, and how* is man sown ? If you were to ask this of superficial readers of the Bible, most of them would reply—When he is laid in the grave. They imagine that the sowing of the seed corresponds to the burial of a dead man's body. But it does not—it cannot. For this reason. Sowing takes place *before* death ; interment *after*. The sowing of the seed, so far from corresponding to a man's death, corresponds, in point of fact, to his birth. This earth of ours is the seminary—seminary, you know, means a seed-place—this earth of ours is the seminary of Heaven. A man is sown when he is born into the world ; just as a grain of wheat is sown when it is placed in the ground. And let me ask you particularly to notice—this is the chief point—the body that shall be is not sown. The body that is sown *never* rises. The body of the seed is adapted to the soil ; the body of the blade of corn is adapted to the realm of air and light. Similarly, man's material body is adapted to a material existence, while his spiritual body is adapted to a spiritual existence. The body sown is suited to one set of circumstances, the body raised to a different set of circumstances. The two bodies—the sown and the risen—are adjusted to distinct phases of being, and differ from one another accordingly.

Secondly, the death of man is compared by the apostle to the death of grain. The seed *putrefies, rots, mingles with the earth*. And a similar fate befalls the human body. But in each case that which dies is only a husk. Within the seed is a living germ ; within the body of man is a living spirit. When the seed decays the germ sprouts ; when man's body dies his spirit passes into a nobler sphere. The seed is sown to die, and so is man. “That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.” And the same is true of what God sows. Death is a necessary step in their development. For through death alone can they enter into the fuller and more beautiful life for which they were created.

And in the third place, the analogy holds equally good of the rising again. The Resurrection of the grain from the soil precisely corresponds to the Resurrection of man from the material world. The seed itself remains in the earth. That which rises is the latent germ ; when it *does* rise, it appears in a new and changed embodiment. The quickening of the seed is not the resurrection of the dead husk, but the bursting forth of its inner life into a more advanced state of being. Similarly the resurrection of man is not the resuscitation of his dead body, but the ascent of his personal spirit into a higher world. The natural body is no more sublimated into the spiritual than the husk of grain is sublimated into the full-

grown plant. The shell in each case is dead and done with—*dead because done with*. The inner life has no further need of the outer envelope. That has now become an encumbrance—an encumbrance which must at all costs be got rid of. Man must rise, not with, but from, his corpse. I will conclude with two little poems—the one by Matthew Prior, the other by Pope. Each of them is a dying man's address to his soul; but in the first death is regarded as a catastrophe, in the second as a triumph—

Poor little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing
To take thy flight, thou knowest not whither?
Thy humorous vein, thy pleasing folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot;
And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou dread'st and hop'st thou know'st not what.

Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, oh, quit this mortal frame.
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish INTO LIFE.

Hark! they whisper; angels say,
"Risen spirit, come away!"
What is this absorbs me quite?

Steals my senses, shuts my sight?
Soothes my spirit, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears:
Heaven opens on my eyes, my ears
With sounds seraphic ring.
I live anew! I rise! I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory?
O death! where is thy sting?

The Spiritual Body

II

"Some one will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Fool! when thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain; and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. So also is the Resurrection of the dead. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body."—I CORINTHIANS XV.

I HAVE explained the precise meaning of this passage. We saw that so far from affirming, it most emphatically denied, the doctrine of a physical Resurrection. St. Paul compares the *sowing, death, and rising* of MAN to the *sowing, death, and rising* of GRAIN. And, Firstly, *as to the sowing*. Man is sown when he is born into the world, just as a grain of wheat is sown when it is placed in the ground. The body that shall be is not sown. The body that is sown never rises. The body of the seed is adapted to the soil; the body of the blade of corn is adapted to the realm of air and light. Similarly man's material body is adapted to a material existence, while his spiritual body is adapted to a spiritual existence. The body sown is suited to one set of circumstances; the body raised to a different set of circumstances. The two bodies—the sown and the risen—are adjusted to distinct phases of being, and differ from one another accordingly.

Secondly, *As to the death*. The seed *putrefies, rots, mingles with the*

earth. And a similar fate befalls the human body. But in each case that which dies is *only a husk*. Within the seed is a living germ ; within the body of man is a living spirit. When the seed decays, the germ sprouts ; when man's body dies, his spirit rises into a nobler sphere. The seed is sown to die ; and so is man. "That which *thou* sowest is not quickened except it die." And this is equally true of what *God* sows. Death is necessary to development. Through death alone is there an entrance into a fuller life.

Thirdly, *As to the rising again.* The Resurrection of the grain from the soil exactly corresponds to the Resurrection of man from the material world. The seed itself remains in the earth. That which rises is the latent germ ; and when it *does* rise, it takes to itself—"God gives it," the apostle says—a body suited to its new conditions and its new environment. The quickening of the seed is not the resuscitation of the OLD form *below* the soil, but the reappearance of its inner life in a NEW form *above*. Similarly, the Resurrection of man is not the resuscitation of his dead body, but the passing of his personal spirit—in a new and changed embodiment—to the higher existence of the spiritual sphere.

A new and changed embodiment. "*There is a spiritual body.*" That is all the apostle tells us about it. That is all he had to tell. He makes no attempt to describe it. He knew no more of the nature of the spiritual body than you or I. Even if it could have been revealed to him—and it *could not* while he remained in the flesh—even if it could have been revealed to him, he would still have been unable to make it intelligible to us. *For this reason* : we can only picture the future life in the colours of the present ; and therefore, so far as the two lives differ, all such pictures will necessarily be false. Can an embryo have any idea of the experience that awaits it, when it has been born into the world and grown up to be a man ? Can an acorn, buried in the dark mould, foresee that by-and-by cattle will recline under its shade, and birds sing upon its branches ? Can a chrysalis, bound up in its sombre swaddling-clothes, suspect that soon it will be a winged butterfly, clad in all the colours of the rainbow, and free to range through the air at will ? *A fortiori*, it is impossible for an inhabitant of a physical world to conceive the nature of the spiritual body or the experience of the spiritual life. Materials for such a conception are entirely lacking. Eye hath not seen anything, ear hath not heard anything, neither hath anything entered into the heart, which could help us in imagining what God hath prepared.

Two things only we can be sure of in regard to the spiritual body, and they are implied—indeed stated—in the phrase itself. *First*, it is a body—i.e., it has form. *Second*, it is spiritual—i.e., it is not material. To begin with the second point. It is really a truism to say that the spiritual body is NOT material. But it must be said ; and

it must be emphasized ; because many people maintain the contrary. They will have it that the spiritual body is material. For example, the catechism of the Scotch Church declares that " the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave shall be raised up at the last Day by the power of Christ, and united to their souls for ever." This theory leaves the poor soul without any body at all from Death to the Day of Judgment. And it further involves the various absurdities and ceremonies to which I have so often referred. Origen truly observed that the doctrine of a physical Resurrection was the foolishness of beggarly minds. Some have thought to diminish the foolishness by supposing that we shall get, not the same, but *similar* bodies—bodies composed, like our present ones, of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, with a dash of phosphorus and iron. But, on this hypothesis, the new bodies would be equally material, and therefore equally fatal to our entrance into the spiritual world. Others have supposed that our physical organism will be sublimated or etherialized. But however much you sublimate or etherialize matter, *it remains matter* nevertheless. The atmosphere is just as material as the granite rock. And so I might go with other modifications of the doctrine of a physical Resurrection. But it must suffice for the present to say that they are—one and all of them—*unscriptural, ridiculous, impossible*.

I would as soon believe in the resuscitation or sublimatisation of—of—of—my pince-nez as in the resuscitation or sublimatisation of my physical body—*sooner*. This little instrument I have invariably found helpful. I wish I could say as much for the other. You would give it back to me when I have succeeded in getting rid of it ? To do so would be like trying to reduce the oak to an acorn, the butterfly to a grub, the hero to an embryo. Nay, it would be sillier, crueller still : for these all live in the same material sphere. But the Kingdom of God is spiritual ; and to resaddle its denizens with their " muddy vestures of decay " would be to drag them back again to the *limitations*, the *weaknesses*, the *sorrows*, the *sins*, from which otherwise they were for ever free.

And, as I said, there is another assertion which may be confidently made in regard to the spiritual body. *It* also is a truism. But I feel bound to lay stress upon it, because it is so often overlooked. The assertion is this. The spiritual body is a body—i.e., it has form. You remember Tennyson's words—

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague, as all unsweet :
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside.

The people who cling tenaciously to the idea of a physical Resurrection imagine, I daresay, that they must either have a material form or else no form at all. But there is not the shadow of a reason for such a supposition. Everything that lives in the material world gathers to itself a body suited to its material environment. And so it must be with everything that lives in the spiritual world.

Unembodied, formless, life is inconceivable. For souls without form, communion would be an impossibility. They would not recognize one another. They would not even recognize themselves. They would lose their sense of personal identity. Their individuality would vanish. They would be merged in the Infinite; and that would be the end of them. You will need form in the future no less than in the present, and *therefore* you may be sure that you will have it. When a grain of wheat is rotting in the earth, and its latent germ emerges into the light of day, God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. And is it possible to believe He will neglect you, when your mortal form dissolves, and you are called upon to enter the spiritual world? If He clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you? I will conclude, as I concluded last Sunday, with two contrasted poems. The first—a translation from Heine—represents the death of the body *as a loss*. I don't know the author of the second. It was sent me by a member of the congregation. In this the death of the body is represented *as a gain*—

My soul doth to the body say—
 "I will not leave thee; I will stay.
 Thou ever wert my second I,
 And round me clingest lovingly.
 Alas! I've come to nakedness,
 A mere abstraction, bodiless,
 Reduced to blessed nullity,
 In yon chill realms of light to be.
 Oh, 'tis quite unbearable; stay,
 Stay with me, dear body, pray."

Nay—but as when one layeth
 His worn-out robes away,
 And taking new ones, sayeth,
 "These will I wear to-day"—

So putteth by the Spirit
 Lightly its garb of flesh,
 And passeth to inherit
 A fairer garb afresh.

Personal Identity

"Some one will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Fool! When thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain; and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. So also is the Resurrection of the dead. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body."—I CORINTHIANS XV.

I HOPE, after the explanation I have already given, you now thoroughly understand the meaning of this passage. Let me run over it again. St. Paul compares the sowing, death, and rising of man to the sowing, death, and rising of grain. And, first, *As to the sowing*. Man is sown when he is born into the world, just as a grain of wheat is sown when it is placed in the ground. The body that shall be is not sown. The body that is sown never rises. The

body of the seed is adapted to the soil ; the body of the blade of corn is adapted to the realm of air and light. Similarly, man's material body is adapted to a material existence, while his spiritual body is adapted to a spiritual existence. The body sown is suited to one set of circumstances, the body raised to a different set of circumstances. The two bodies—the sown and the risen—are adjusted to distinct phases of being, and differ from one another accordingly.

Secondly, *As to the death.* The seed putrefies, rots, mingles with the earth ; and a similar fate befalls the human body. But in each case that which dies is *only a husk*. Within the seed is a living germ ; within the body of man is a living spirit. When the seed decays, the germ sprouts ; when a man's body dies, his spirit rises into a nobler sphere. The seed is sown to die, and so is man. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." It does not rise into a higher life until it has shaken itself free from the body of the lower. And this is equally true of what God sows. Death is necessary to development. Through death alone is there an entrance into a fuller life.

Thirdly, *As to rising again.* The Resurrection of the grain from the soil exactly corresponds to the Resurrection of man from the material world. The seed itself remains in the earth. That which rises is the *latent germ*, and when it does rise, it takes to itself—"God gives it," the apostle says—a body suited to its new conditions and its new environment. The quickening of the seed is not the resuscitation of the OLD from *below* the soil, but the reappearance of its inner life in a NEW form *above*. Similarly, the resurrection of man is not the resuscitation of his dead body, but the passing of his personal spirit—in a new and changed embodiment—to the higher existence of the spiritual sphere. Man must rise not with, but from, his corpse.

Now let us pass to another point. In each case that which rises, that which exists in different forms, is itself invisible. The germ of life within the seed, the personal spirit within the physical organism, each of these must be carefully distinguished from any and every form which it may assume, and so I am going to speak this morning about personal identity.

Listen. One of my pupils once wrote me as follows : "It pains some of us very much, indeed—more perhaps than you quite realize—to say 'Never again,' as we kiss the cold dead cheek and fold the stiff hands. To resign the hope of a physical Resurrection is hard to some of us, for the body seems so much more real than the soul." This state of mind is, no doubt, very common. It is put still more strongly and petulantly in the following passages. The writer begins by stating a view similar to that which I have endeavoured to expound, then follows his criticism upon it : "What have you to do with flesh, the gross garment in which the spirit hides itself ? You shall see her again. But the *hand*, the *foot*, the *forehead* you loved you shall see

no more. Higher than she was on earth, as the tree is higher than the seed, so shall you behold her, *changed, glorified*. High words, ringing well. But they are the offering of jewels to the hungry, of gold to the man who dies for bread. Bread is corruptible, gold is incorruptible; bread is common, gold is rare; but the starving man will barter all the gold-mines in the world for one morsel of bread. Around God's throne there may be choirs of angels, cherubim and seraphim, rising tier above tier; but not for one of them all does the soul crave. Only, perhaps, for a little human woman that it once loved. Rob me of the *thoughts* and *feelings* and *desires* that are my life, and what is there left? Your Immortality is annihilation. Your hereafter is a lie."

This mood is not unnatural, but it results from a confusion of thought. It arises from mistaking the physical organism for personal identity. ROUGHLY, everybody distinguishes between them. If your friend had an arm or a leg amputated, you would not feel that you had lost a part of *him*. A person who weighed twenty stone would not be regarded as *more of a man* than one who only weighed twelve. Everybody would agree with Dr. Watts—

Were I as tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean in my span,
I must be measured by my soul.
The mind's the standard of the man.

Still, as my correspondent said, the body *does seem* to most people more real than the soul. Matter appears so stable and permanent; mind so visionary—not to say apocryphal. We feel sure of matter, but we don't feel at all sure of mind. And yet reflection will show that this view of things is *precisely the opposite* of the truth.

Matter, in point of fact, has no *stability, no identity*. It is only the *invisible* that is really permanent. The things which are seen are *transient, temporal*. The unseen alone is *lasting, eternal*. Let me make this clear.

Matter, I say, has no identity. The mist rising from the river is an illustration of a universal process. The lichens upon the granite hills are transforming rock into gas and soil, as really as the sun is changing the river into mist. Neither the rock nor the lichen, nor the gas and dust into which they are transformed, has any actual identity. This earth of ours, and everything within it and upon it, is in a state of perpetual flux. The *appearance* of material objects may be identical, but *their substance* is for ever being changed. In common speech, however, we frequently call things the same when we know perfectly well they are but similar. For instance, I go back to a spot where years ago I used to watch the ships on the horizon, and I say, "There are the same white sails." But they are not the same; the only sameness is *sameness of impression*. In like manner

we speak of the same river ; but there is no such thing. The particles of the river are changing every minute. Some are going into the sea ; some are coming down from the hills ; some are rising into the atmosphere as moisture. So, too, with a ray of light, a column of smoke, a flame of fire. These things are the same only in the sense that they give us the same impression. It is this sameness of impression, combined with our lax use of terms, which blinds us to the fact that there is no stability in the material world.

It is not till we leave inanimate Nature and come to organic life that we find anything approaching identity. Plants and animals, it is true, are continually altering their outer forms. But *here* there is an *inner*, invisible something—a *latent germ*, an *immaterial presence*, a *vital force*, or whatever you please to call it—that remains constant in the midst of change. When an oak is to be produced, its life is committed to an acorn. By-and-by it casts aside this outer wrapping, which is then no more to it than any other extraneous matter ; and it shoots up in a new form, adapted, not to the dark mould, but to the light and air of day. When a butterfly is to be produced, there is first an egg, then a larva or worm, then a caterpillar, then a chrysalis, and, finally, from the decay of this enfolding husk springs forth an insect that can fly. There have been, you see, constant changes of embodiment ; but the one life has persisted through them all. And it is the same with man. The alterations in the human body, though less perceptible, are every bit as real. When it has grown to maturity, it does not *seem* to alter—barring accident or disease or old age. And yet, it *is* altering every second. Nourishment is change, for nourishment is combustion. Chemists tell us that we are ablaze to our finger-tips. Food is the fuel ; and the fire runs along the veins like flues, burning up certain particles, which are then replaced by others. The process of change is the process of life. Stop the change, and death will at once ensue. And so it comes about that we are for ever shedding our material organisms. To-day we are clothed, you and I, with a body of which not a single molecule formerly belonged to us.

And so, I repeat, though the longing to see again the *old, worn-out, dead* body of a friend is not unnatural, it is, nevertheless, the result of an illusion. A shoe or a glove or a handkerchief may be dear to you because they belonged to some one whom you loved. But they were not he. Neither was his body. He dwelt far away within it. And in the more transparent form of the spiritual world you will be able to come infinitely nearer to him than you could ever have approached through the coarse barrier of the flesh.

Reunion

IT is the hope of Reunion that fans the desire for Immortality into a flame. I admit, at the outset, that there are some who possess neither the one nor the other. The dreams of men as to what they want beyond the grave are infinitely varied—ranging from Nirvana to Valhalla.

To some, no doubt, especially to persons of feeble health or overstrained conscientiousness, the notion of final repose is more grateful than that of eternal activity. There are Buddhists of the West, as of the East, to whom life seems a burden ; and they extend by anticipation the *tedium vitæ* which they feel here to any existence that may await them hereafter. Probably if these people understood themselves better they would recognize, even in uttermost lassitude, the truth of Tennyson's words—

'Tis life of which our veins are scant,
'Tis life—not death—for which we pant,
More life, and fuller, that we want.

But, anyhow, such desire for annihilation, as I pointed out to you several weeks ago, is abnormal—the exception, not the rule. There are others too, it must be admitted, persons of a coldly intellectual temperament, who would echo the sentiments of Martineau, which were these : “ I have no objection to being extinguished. I have no wish for any further experience. I feel no solicitude about parting which will bring no pain. I have lived a life so full that its fulness is equivalent to length. There is much in my life that I am glad to have enjoyed, and much that generates a mood of contentment at its close. I am satisfied to have done with life. I have had a noble share of it, and I desire no more. I neither wish to live longer here nor to find life anywhere else.” Such cases, again, are abnormal—the exception, not the rule. Whoever feels in this way about the world to come has never loved anybody sufficiently to desire to be reawakened to meet him. Not to desire to meet, at whatever cost, a being whom we have supremely loved is a contradiction in terms. Were there to loom before us centuries of labour and of pain, we should be willing, we should be thankful, to go through them, if only we could confidently say—

Soul of my soul, I shall meet thee again ;
And with God be the rest.

The saddest of all sorrows for those who have hearts to love—i.e., for the great majority of mankind—the saddest of all sorrows are the bereavements of Death. Of all questions that haunt the mind, wringing its faculties for a solution, beseeching the oracles of the uni-

verse for a response, none has, for most of us, such absorbing interest as the question of Reunion. Is the farewell of the dying the announcement of lasting separation, or is it but the good-night greeting of those who shall meet on the morrow? Does the grave sunder us for evermore? or shall we, *somewhere, anywhere, some time, any time*, in the ample creation, in the boundless ages, be reunited to those whom we have loved?

It is of much importance to a man, especially to a man of keen sensibility, which view he takes. For him who believes that beyond this land of tombs there is no Reunion, the death of friends will be an appalling disaster. It will take from earth and sky a glory never to be replaced. It will leave in his heart an aching void which nothing can ever fill. If he is to go on living his own life, he must forget the happy past, and lose himself in the excitement and turmoil of the present. Even then, if he is true to the holiest instincts of his soul, he will find that the fatal separations have *irreparably impoverished* his being.

For this losing is true dying;
This is lordly man's down-lying;
This his slow but sure declining—
Star by star his world resigning.

But for him who expects soon to be reunited, under fairer auspices and by firmer bonds, to those who have gone before, the death of friends is a message from the great Father—a message, solemn, yet kind, laden, indeed, with sadness, yet brightened by promises of the sweet By-and-by. His tears flow not in scalding bitterness from the Marah fountain of despair, but in chastened joy from the smitten rock of faith. So far from endeavouring to forget the beloved dead, he will cling to their memory with redoubled tenderness, as a sacred trust and a redeeming power. When he is bereft of friend after friend, he will sigh to each departing spirit, "*Auf wiedersehen*"; pleasant, stimulating, sanctifying recollections of them will linger in the day-dreams of remaining life; and he will hear their celestial voices pleading from on high to win him to virtue and to God.

It is of much importance to a man, I say, whether he believes or disbelieves in the restoration of the broken ties of earth. The belief is full of inspiration; the disbelief is paralyzing. The one is a well of comfort, making an oasis in the dreariest of lives. The other is a withering blast, that brings with it nothing but misery and woe. Danton said to his comrades on the scaffold, "Our heads will meet in yonder sack." The Christian, as he lays his loved one in the grave, says, "Our souls will meet in yonder heaven." Without that soothing and sustaining trust the intolerable wretchedness of the bereaved would often burst through the fortress of the mind, hurl reason from its throne, and trample the affections in the dust of madness. Many a gifted soul, unknown in the nameless privacy of his life, has been

so conjoined with a worthy peer that, rather than be left behind, he has prayed they might die together—together flit across the dolorous strait to the other shore, and

Together reach the blessed goal,
Where He that died in the Holy Land
Might reach them out a loving hand,
And take them—as a single soul.

Many a faithful mourner, whose love has been blighted so far as this world is concerned, would tell you that without Reunion the highest heaven would be for him as the deepest hell. *Listen.*

O Father, take her not away!
Let not life's dear assurance lapse
Into death's agonized "perhaps";
A hope without a promise, where
Less than assurance is despair!
Give me some sign, if go she must,
That death's *not worse* than dust to dust;
No heaven, on whose oblivious shore
Joy I might have, but her no more!
The bitterest cross, it seems to me,
Of all is infidelity;
And so, if I may choose, I'd miss
The kind of heaven which comes to this.

Moreover, beside those to whom we specially apply, and who specially deserve the name of lovers, there are *parents, children, husbands, wives, friends, disciples*, who are possessed with an ecstasy of desire for reunion with the beings to whom they owe what was happiest and best in their earthly career. Almost every member of the human race has an unappeasable yearning to meet again some one whom he supremely loved. I take it, therefore, that the fact of Reunion is established beyond the possibility of dispute. Shall these desires and yearnings be brutally ignored? Will these affections end in so many heaps of dust? Is the anguish of bereavement gratuitous? Can every hope of the smitten heart be false? Does each hour which knits us more closely together only bring us nearer to an everlasting farewell? Is love a meteor gleam in a starless night? No! It declares itself an eternal thing. There is an element of infinity about it—so much so that it never fails to express itself in words *transcending time*. We speak, for instance, of *undying affection*, and of *immortal love*. Love alone can make the next world heaven. And so the desire for Reunion is nothing less than a prophecy—a divine avowal that we are to meet again. The evidence of Love is overwhelming. Reunion is as sure—as sure—as God.

Recognition

LOVING hearts are often haunted by the fear that their lost ones have gone *for ever* beyond their ken. A clever pupil of mine once wrote me as follows: "Many people dread—I know *I* did—that their friends will suddenly at death spring up into glorified beings past all recognition. Even if we hope that we too shall in time be similarly developed, the feeling of present estrangement and aloofness is very bitter. Besides, *they have the start of us*. Will they not outstrip us in the race of progress? And if so, how can we expect to meet them again?" The same idea is finely expressed in a poem by Mrs. Browning entitled "Little Mattie"—

Just so young but yesternight,
Now she is as old as Death.
 Meek, obedient in your sight,
 Gentle to a beck or breath
 Only on last Monday! *Yours*,
 Answering you like silver bells
 Lightly touched! *One hour matures!*
 You can teach her nothing else.
 She has seen the mystery hid
 Under Egypt's pyramid:
 Since her life came to a close
 She has learnt what Ramses knows.

Av, and if she spoke, may be
 She would ask you, like the Son,
 "What is now 'twixt thee and me?"
 Dreadful answer! better none.
 Yours on Monday, God's to-day!
 Yours, your child, your blood, your
 heart,
 Called . . . you called her, did you say,
 "Little Mattie" for your part?
 Now *already* that sounds strange,
 And you wonder, in this change,
 What *He* calls His angel-creature,
 Higher up than you can reach her.

You, you had the right, you thought,
 To survey her with sweet scorn,
 Poor gay child, who had not caught
 Yet the octave-stretch forlorn
 Of your large experience! Nay,
 Now your places are changed so,
 In that same superior way
 She esteems *you* dull and low
 As you did herself exempt
 From life's sorrows. Grand contempt
 Of the spirits risen awhile,
 Who look back with such a smile!

There's the sting of't. That, I think,
 Hurts the most a thousandfold!
 To feel sudden, at a wink—
 Some dear child we used to scold,
 Praise, pet, fondle, kiss, and tease,
 Teach and tumble as our own,
 All its curls about our knees,
 Rise up suddenly full-grown.
 Who could wonder such a night
 Made a woman mad outright?
 Show me Michael with the sword
 Rather than such angels, Lord!

The majority of theologians have a theory—as to the means of Recognition—which is quite worthless. They assume that nothing is required but the retention or recovery of physical peculiarities. Some insist upon the pure and simple Resuscitation of the natural body. Others think that the spiritual body is a copy of the natural, an immaterial facsimile, which preserves, in shadowy outline, all its essential features. Now, as regards a physical Resurrection, I have shown you over and over again its utter absurdity, its absolute impossibility, so we need not discuss it any further. As regards the second supposition—which was Swedenborg's—it is neither absurd nor impossible, and, for anything I know to the contrary, it may be true. But such a correspondence between the spiritual body and the physical would not always suffice for Recognition. Indeed it would sometimes be a hindrance rather than a help. *Think*. If you had not seen a person

between childhood and maturity, you could not, from his body alone, even guess that it was he. This difficulty, carried over into the future life, is finely illustrated by Shakespeare. Constance, you remember, on hearing that her son had been cast into prison and would probably be kept there till he died, laments that when she meets him in heaven he will be an old, decrepit man. She says to her confessor—

Father Cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven.
If that be true, I'll see my boy again,
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven,
I shall not know him; therefore never, never,
Shall I behold my pretty Arthur more.

The same lament might be made by every mother who leaves behind her a child that is destined to attain old age. Supposing, if you like for the sake of argument, that its resurrection body were, not the worn-out organism committed to the grave, but the body of its prime, even that would not be the body she had known and loved. And to imagine that the Deity would resurrect its childish form is to imagine that He would stultify Himself. What He was going to raise as a child He would not allow to die as a man. So, you see, in this and similar cases, Recognition cannot be dependent either upon the physical body, or upon any resemblance to it which the spiritual body may bear.

There must be a better and a surer means.¹ Let us see now if we cannot discover it by an examination of our present experiences. Well, to begin with, as I have so often said, a man is not his body, but the soul within it. And we know something—roughly and imperfectly, I admit, through the coarse medium of the flesh, but still we do know something—of one another's souls. It is not only, nor chiefly, *by their visible features, by their physical peculiarities*, that we recognize our friends. We also, and far more truly, recognize them *by the traits of their character, by the trend of their lives, by the effluence of their spirits, by the atmosphere which surrounds them*. Even as regards the body itself, that which most clearly distinguishes one man from another is *not his shape, but the tones of his voice, the expressions of his countenance*, which are immediate reflections of his soul. HERE mental vision, the faculty by which we see *invisible, unseeable*, qualities—call it *insight, intuition, sympathy, what you please*—HERE, I say,

¹ Some people don't give the Deity credit for as much common sense as they themselves possess—and that's little enough.

the sight of the mind plays an important part in Recognition. **HERE-AFTER** it may be all-sufficient. The characteristics of the soul *endure* through any and every alteration of the body—will *endure* though the body be resolved into its native dust. And amidst “the multitude that no man can number,” friends may be reunited by the operation of this law of insight, acting, through the more transparent medium of the spiritual body, with the ease and precision of chemical affinity. “Is it possible,” asks Mr. Alger—“is it possible that as we move through the ambrosial air of heaven, we could touch, in passing, the radiant robes of one whom we have supremely loved without a thrill of Recognition?” The following is a poetic, but at the same time a very reasonable, description of what might occur when, for instance, mother and child meet beyond the veil—

It was not, mother, that I knew thy face.
The luminous eclipse that's on it now,
Though it was fair on earth, did make it strange
E'en to me, who loved as well as knew thee:
It was my heart that cried out—Mother!

Students of Dante will remember that he speaks of a similar experience on his first meeting the angel form of Beatrice.

Recognition may be effected, then, through the mysterious attraction of sympathy. If you think this idea fanciful, an overdrawn conclusion of the imagination not warranted by the average realities of daily life, I do not agree with you. However, there is another means, *undoubtedly, admittedly* terrestrial.

A man's outward form may be so changed by *disease, exposure, hardship, privation, or other causes*, that he cannot be identified by sight. Yet that does not make identification impossible. Boon companions, after being long separated, have not unfrequently met at some chance spot and talked together as strangers; but after a while, by some accidental allusion, or through the agency of a third person, their identity has been revealed. In the early History of America many instances are recorded of children torn from their parents by the Indians, and recovered after a lapse of twenty or thirty years, when there was nothing but circumstantial evidence to identify them. But this did not detract from the sweetness of Reunion. Let any parent, let any friend, ask his heart whether such a discovery of the object of his love would not be just as welcome as though there had been no outward change? Nay, might not the very change itself in some cases, if, for instance, it resulted from the suffering of separation, be but an added bond of union? Similarly, in the life to come, supposing we were unable *directly* to recognize our earthly companions, either by the eyes of the spiritual body or by the instincts and intuitions of the heart, we might yet identify them, *indirectly*, by speech.

And if you are still unsatisfied, if you urge that, even admitting the

truth of what I have said, you may nevertheless wander for weary ages through the vast unknown without happening to fall in with those whom you have loved, what shall I reply? *Why, this.* It is ridiculous to imagine that the means of Reunion are limited to those which I can suggest. The Deity, forsooth, could find a way of bringing you together when the right time had come. Reunion is as certain as the very existence of God. Can you not trust the *time* and the *manner* of it to Him? Can you not be content to say—

Soul of my soul, I *shall* meet thee again,
And with God be the rest?

The Readjustment of Relationships

THE readjustment of relationships must be *an important factor* in any better life. I have been speaking about Reunion—Reunion with those whom we supremely love. The desire for it—which is, perhaps, the strongest instinct in our nature—may be accepted as *prophetic*. THESE relationships will *undoubtedly* be continued because Happiness would otherwise be an impossibility. “O Mutter, Mutter, was ist Himmel? O Mutter, was ist Hölle? Mit ihm, mit ihm ist Himmel, und Onkel Wilhelm Hölle.” I need scarcely say this has nothing to do with relatives *as such*. I need scarcely say I did not intend to suggest that all the members of every family were going to be brought together in the future. Heaven forbid! Reunion is a second union—which of course implies a first. And we are not united—really united—*by consanguinity*. Union—real union—is not achieved by the mere name of *relative*. Quite the contrary very often. Some people seem to think that the special value of relationship lies in the opportunity which it affords them of being specially disagreeable. There are families where even at the Christmas dinner it is customary to invite a stranger for the purpose of keeping the peace. A relative *may be* the worst of enemies. “No stranger,” says O. W. Holmes, “can get *many* notes of torture out of a human soul. That requires one who knows it well. Such an one understands the whole gamut of your nervous system, and can touch the naked nerve-pulp as a pianist strikes the keys. A delicate woman is the best instrument; she has such a magnificent compass of sensibility. From the deep inward moan, which follows pressure on the great nerves of right to the sharp cry as the filaments of taste are struck with a crashing sweep, is a range which no other instrument possesses. A few exercises on it daily fit a man wonderfully for his habitual labour, and refresh him immensely as he returns from it. This nerve-playing has its Vieuxtemps and its Thalberg; its most accomplished artists are invariably—husbands!” Reunion with a thing like that! why—in comparison,

Hell would be a boon ! Ties which lacerate, but do not bind, will be for ever snapped asunder by the kindly hand of Death.

There is also in family life a less extreme but much more common flaw—viz., indifference. Let me read you a little poem. It is entitled "The Neglected Child"—

I never was a favourite,
My mother never smiled
On me, with half the tenderness
She gave her fairer child.
I've seen her kiss my sister's cheek
While playing at her knee;
I've turned away to hide my tears—
There was no kiss for me.

And yet I strove to please, with all
My little store of sense;
I strove to please, and infancy
Can give no real offence.
But when my artless efforts met
A cold, ungentle check,
I did not dare to throw myself
In tears upon her neck.

How blessed are the beautiful !
Love waits on them from birth.
O beauty ! in my nursery
I learned to know thy worth.

For even there I often felt
Forsaken and forlorn;
And wished—as others seemed to wish—
I never had been born.

I'm sure I was affectionate—
But in my sister's face
There was a sort of something *claimed*
A smile or an embrace.
But when I raised my lips to meet
The pressure children prize,
None knew the feeling in my heart;
It spoke not in my eyes.

Alas ! that heart too keenly felt
The anguish of neglect.
I saw my sister's lovely form
With gems and roses decked;
I did not covet *them* ; but oft,
When angrily reproved,
I envied her the privilege
Of being so beloved.

For all such aching hearts there must be compensation—ample compensation—in the world to come. With that, however, I am not at present concerned. I content myself with pointing out that the mockery of barren relationships cannot follow them beyond the grave. Relationships which are purely formal—whether of *parent and child*, *brother and sister*, *husband and wife*—will be dissolved. There is no reason for their continuance—no means of continuing them. Relatives who were kept together *in life* only by the accident of birth or other mundane conventionalities, when set free by death from these artificial bonds will *naturally, inevitably, mercifully* drift apart.

In the third place—I spoke first, you remember, of antipathy, and secondly of indifference—now I observe, thirdly, an earthly relationship may quite conceivably be renewed, even though it was not a particularly happy one, if there were any genuine affection *au fond*. THEN the only readjustment needed would be a better mutual understanding. Take the case of Carlyle. He certainly did not make his wife happy. He seemed at times to be doing his best to make her wretched. But—his remorse ! "O for some more of her, to tell her with what love and admiration, as of the beautifullest of human souls, I did intrinsically always regard her." Irritability is sometimes *physical*. The spirit may be amiable and the body morose. Let me give you an illustration. The best servant I ever had was afflicted with a terrible temper. Though it puzzled me, I pretended not to notice it ; for he did his work so well that I wanted if possible to keep

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him. Poor fellow ! he died suddenly, and a post-mortem examination showed that he had been all the time suffering from a tumour. That at once *explained* and *excused* his temper. Similarly, in the clearer light of a better world, you will learn to make allowance for the bygone frailties of the flesh. In some such way, perchance, you may discover that you were loved better than you knew, and you may longingly await Reunion—Reunion with one to whom on earth you scarcely felt united at all.

Finally, relationships which were but foreshadowed *here*, may *there* be actually realized. This has been superbly illustrated by Browning—

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead !
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed ;
She plucked that piece of geranium flower,
Beginning to die, too, in the glass.
Little has yet been changed, I think.
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinges' chink.

Just sixteen summers ; and then she died !
Perhaps she had hardly heard my name.
The time had not come to love ; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares—
And the sweet white form is all of her.

Is it too late, then, Evelyn Hope ?
Your heart was gentle, pure, and true ;
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew.
And just because I was thrice as old,
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was nought to each, must I be told ?
We were mere fellow-mortals, nought beside ?

Not so, methinks ! For the good God above
Is great to grant as mighty to make,
And creates a love to reward a love :
I claim you, then, for my own love's sake !
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few :
Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come—at last it will—
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so sweet and gay ?
Why your hair was amber I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium red—
And what you could do with me, in fine,
In the new life, come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes.
Yet one thing, *one*, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me ;
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope !
What is the issue ? Let us see.

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;
 My life seemed full as it could hold;
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
 So, hush!—I will give you this leaf to keep,
 See! I shut it inside the dear cold hand.
 There! that is our secret. Go to sleep!
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

The Continuity of Life

PEOPLE generally imagine that there is a violent break between this world and the next; they generally imagine that the future life is not only *different* from the present, but *disconnected*. Some suppose Death will level everybody up—everybody, at least, who is “*saved*”; some suppose death will level everybody up to the same standard of perfection; but if you think for a moment, you will see that it is impossible. Such a process would destroy personal identity, and would therefore be virtually the annihilating of us. I know myself as one who possesses impulses—bad as well as good, faculties more or less undeveloped, and a character infinitely far from perfect. Suddenly alter all this, suddenly make me perfect, and I should not know myself, I should not *be* myself. It would not be I, but another being, that entered at my death into the spiritual world. And so the continuity between earth and heaven would be snapped, and life would be reduced to an absurdity.

Others think, on the contrary, that we shall all be *levelled down* to the same standard of mediocrity. These are the people who look forward to an eternity of *repose*. They are going to sit among the lazy saints, and bask in the sunshine of the divine favour. They will recline on the banks of the heavenly Jordan, recounting to each other their past experiences; and perhaps they will listen to stories from the lips of *Adam*, of *Moses*, of *David*. *Lounging and gossiping*—these, forsooth, are to be the chief employments of the saved. One little effort, or rather two little efforts, may be occasionally required of them—viz., to wave palm branches and to sing. That is *all* FOR EVER. Before we could enjoy such a life most of us would need a deal of levelling down. A being of average intelligence would find it very paltry and insipid, while the great thinkers and workers of the world would shrink from it with disgust, unless they had first been shorn of their noblest qualities. At that rate the pleasures of heaven would be infinitely inferior to the pleasures of earth. At that rate the future life would be infinitely meaner than the present. At that rate entering into the spiritual sphere would be sinking to the level of an animal, of a clod. Man now is an instrument of myriad strings. And is he to spend his future *eternally thrumming* upon one? If so, he will soon

wish himself back in the world of toil. Ay, he will think—and rightly think—

The world of pain were better, if therein
One's heart might still be human,
And natural pity drop upon its fires
Some cooling tears.

Such silly, drivelling notions of Immortality make it difficult for intelligent men and women to believe in the doctrine—make it *impossible* for them, even, to wish to believe in it. Just contrast now the following meditation of Richard Jefferies: "Recognizing my own inner consciousness so clearly, death did not seem to me to affect my personality. In dissolution there was no bridgeless chasm, no unfathomable gulf of separation. Look at a living person. The soul is not visible, but only the body which it animates. Therefore, merely because after death the soul is not visible, we cannot infer that it does not still live. The condition of being unseen is the same condition which occurs while the body is living; so that, intrinsically, there is nothing *exceptional* or *supernatural* in the life of the soul after death. As I stood by a grave, the spirit of the man who had been interred there seemed to me really alive. And this was quite *natural*—as natural and simple as the grass waving in the wind, the bees humming, or the larks' songs. Only by the strongest effort of mind could I conceive of extinction. That would be supernatural. That would require a miracle. The Immortality of the soul is natural—like earth. Listening to the sighing of the grass, I *felt* Immortality, as I felt the beauty of the summer morning." And if you would have the same clear realization of Immortality, you must have the same clear realization of the nature of the soul. The soul is the invisible something that *sees* and *hears* and *feels* and *thinks* and *will's* and *loves*, and gathers up these varied experiences into the unity of its personal life. Death, therefore, which is merely the removal of its outer wrapping, leaves it precisely what it was. It is no better than before and no worse. It knows no more and no less. It has neither gained nor lost a single faculty. It has but entered into an environment more favourable for the exercise of its faculties, more adapted for the acquisition of knowledge, more helpful in the struggle to become good. As we leave off here, so shall we begin there.

We know full well that, in the dim Hereafter,
The thread of that great scheme, whereof this life
Is—as a something tells us—but a part,
Shall not be lost but taken up again,
And woven into one completed whole.

A man takes into the next world nothing but himself. Yet, if he has made the best of himself, what more could he want to take? Think how much the self includes. Think of the capacity, so to speak, which is stored up there for the continuation and development of life.

First and foremost there are the treasures of memory. Then there are *acquired capacities, disciplined powers, cultivated faculties*. The eye, indeed, may lose its sight at death, and the cunning hand of the workman may lose its skill. But the mental enrichment which has been gained through the eye, and the mental training which has resulted from faithful workmanship—these things are not lost. They have been woven into the man's innermost being. Moreover, all that Providence has gained for him—the quickening of sensibility by sorrow or trial, the stimulating of ambition by the "*withheld completions*" of the present—these things are not lost. They belong, not to the body, which is left behind in the world of matter, but to the soul, which rises into the world of spirit.

Finally—finally—yes, it was not quite correct to say that a man takes into the next world only himself. There is something else which he may take, or which, at all events, he may count on finding. The good he has done to his fellows—what is it but treasure laid up in heaven? In the happy by-and-by—as his crowning and supreme reward—there will meet him, with glad welcome and fond devotion, every human soul whose life has been made better *by his care, by his teaching, by his love*.

"She is dead!" they said to him. "Come away!
Kiss her! and leave her!—thy love is clay!"

Over her eyes, which gazed too much,
They drew the lids with a gentle touch;

About her brows and her dear, pale face
They tied her veil and her marriage lace.

And over her bosom they crossed her hands.
"Come away," they said, "God understands."

And they held their breath as they left the room.
With a shudder they marked its strangeness and gloom!

But he—who loved her *too well* to dread
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful Dead—

He lit his lamp, and he turned the key.
Once more alone again—he and she!

He and she; but she could not speak,
Though he kissed as of old the quiet cheek.

He and she; yet she would not smile,
Though he called her the name that was fondest erewhile.

He and she; and she did not move
For all his passionate whispers of love!

Then he said, "Cold lips! and breast without breath!
Is there not any voice, any language of death?"

"Dumb to the ear, and still to the sense,
But to heart and soul distinct—intense!"

"See now—I listen *with soul*, not ear,
What was the secret of dying, Dear?"

"Was it the infinite wonder of all
That you ever could let life's flower fall?

"Or was it a greater marvel to feel
The perfect peace o'er the agony steal?

"And was it the innermost heart of the bliss
To find out, so, what a wisdom love is?

"Oh, perfect Dead! Oh, Dead most Dear,
I hold the breath of my soul to hear.

"There must be pleasure in dying, sweet,
To make you so placid from head to feet!

"I would tell *you*, Darling, if I were dead,
And 'twere *your* hot tears upon *my* brow shed.

"You should not ask, vainly, with streaming eyes,
What was, in Death, the chiefest surprise;

"The very strangest and suddenest thing
Of all surprises that dying must bring."

* * * * *

Who will believe that he heard her say,
With the soft, rich voice, in the old sweet way—

"The uttermost wonder is this: I hear,
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear.

"I can speak, now you listen with soul alone.
If your soul could *see*, it would all be shown.

"I should laugh for joy if you did not cry;
Oh, listen! Love lasteth! *Love* cannot die.

"I, now, am your Angel, who once was your Bride
And I know that, though dead, I never have *died*."

The Progressiveness of Life

I

LAST Sunday I spoke about the continuity of life. Some people imagine that there is a violent break between this world and the next; they generally imagine that the future life is *not only different* from the present, *but disconnected*.

Others think, on the contrary, that we shall all be levelled down to the same standard of mediocrity. According to this theory, the redeemed will be denuded of the best of their earthly faculties. There is no further use for them. In heaven there will be no science, no art, no literature, no philosophy, no work. Its inhabitants will pass their time in gossiping and singing and waving palm branches in honour of their god. What a god! What a life! It would hardly content a fool. As for the great thinkers and workers of the world, they would look upon it with infinite disgust. At that rate, the future life would be meaner—far meaner—than the present. Entering into the spiritual sphere would be sinking to the level of a clodhopper, of a clod. Heaven would be a preposterous anticlimax to earth.

I pointed out that the best way to rid ourselves of such silly notions is to gain a clear conception as to the nature of the soul. The soul is the *invisible, persistent* something that *sees* and *hears* and *feels* and *thinks* and *wills* and *loves*, and gathers up these varied experiences into the unity of its personal life. It retains its identity in the midst of a changing world—in the midst of a changing organism. It was itself when its body was entirely different. It will be itself when its body has been resolved into dust. *Souls are the only permanencies.* As they have survived the flux of phenomena in life, so will they survive the flux of phenomena in Death. Death, which is but the removal of the soul's outer wrapping, leaves it precisely what it was. It is no better than before and no worse. It knows no more and no less. It has neither gained nor lost a single faculty. Very probably, as Swedenborg says, the dead do not at first realize that they have died. They find themselves exactly what they were. The only difference is in their surroundings. They have entered into another environment—an environment more favourable for the exercise of their faculties, more adapted for the acquisition of knowledge, more helpful in the struggle to become good.

What, then, does the soul take with it into the unseen world? What is the *capital*, so to speak, with which it starts upon its new career? Well, to begin with, there are all its treasures of memory and of experience. Then, too, there are its acquired capacities, its disciplined powers, its cultivated faculties. The eye, indeed, may lose its sight at death, and the cunning hand of the workman may lose its skill. But the mental enrichment which has been gained through the eye, the mental training which has resulted from years of faithful workmanship—these things are not lost. They have been woven into the man's inmost being. Moreover, all that Providence has gained for him—the quickening of sensibility by sorrow and trial, the stimulating of ambition by the "withheld completions" of the present—these things are not lost. They belong, not to the body, which is left behind in the world of matter, but to the soul, which rises into the world of spirit. And, finally, all the good he has done to others he will take with him, or at all events he will find again. In the happy by-and-by—as his supreme reward—there will meet him, with glad welcome and fond devotion, every human soul whose life has been made better *by his care, by his teaching, by his love.*

My love, we can but think, when we
That ampler life together see;
Some true result will then appear
Of what we were together here.

The facts of life inspire the hope
That, in a world of larger scope,
What here was faithfully begun
Will be completed—not undone.

So much for the connexion between this life and the next—the one a *continuation* of the other. To-day and next Sunday we will consider the *progressiveness* of life, or, in other words, the development which awaits us in the spiritual world.

I admit, I may as well say in passing, that there are many human beings who seem to have no chance of fitting themselves *immediately* for the higher life. I admit that *Reincarnation* may be necessary for those who die prematurely, immaturely. Almost *all the imperial thinkers* of the race have said so. But with that I am not at present concerned. I am going now to speak of the progress which men may *eventually* make when they *are* clothed in a spiritual body, when they *do* live in a spiritual environment. Do you know that magnificent sonnet of Blanco White's? —

Mysterious night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And, lo! creation *widened* in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why some, then, shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive us, why not Life?

Fancy, inspired by fear, generally pictures Death as something horrible and terrific. For instance, the Hindus personified him as a monster with a million mouths, devouring all created things. We, too, are wont to depict him as a grim and loathsome skeleton. But sometimes Pagans—as we call them in our insolent conceit—sometimes Pagans have known better. Not unfrequently they have perceived the true benignity of Death. "*Mors janua vitæ*," said the Romans—Death is the gate of life. And this belief was illustrated in their mythology by the legends of Tithonus and Apollo. Through the prayers of Aurora, who loved him, it was granted that Tithonus should not die. But after a while, when he grew old and decrepit, this fatal gift of *earthly* immortality became to him a curse. "Me only," he laments, "me only"—of all mankind—"cruel immortality consumes." Then there is the converse legend of Apollo, who prayed for the *best* gift of Heaven. The answer he received was this, "At the end of your days it shall be granted." In a week's time he fell asleep and awoke—*on earth*—no more. The Druids, too—that wondrous hierarchy of minstrel priests—taught the same inspired doctrine. They and their disciples were possessed by such a happy conception of the life to come that at funerals they would dress themselves in white and would smile—through their tears—upon the mortal remains of those

who had passed beyond the veil. And were they not right? *Listen*
Can you not hear the dead speaking *like this* ?—

In youth I died, in maiden bloom,
With gentle hand Death touched my
cheek,
And with His touch there came to me
A spirit calm and meek.

He took away all wish to stay;
He was so kind, I feared him not.
My friends saw but my slow decline,
And mourned my timeless lot.

They saw but sorrow; I descried
The bliss that ne'er shall fade away.

They felt the shadow of the tomb;
I marked the heavenly day.

I heard them whisper o'er my bed,
"Another hour and she must die."
I was too weak to answer them;
That deathless life was nigh.

They clothed themselves in robes of black,
Through the sad aisles the requiem rang.
Meanwhile the white-robed choirs of
heaven
A gladsome pæan sang.

Or like this ?—

The dead! Is it you who call us dead!
What! you who wait for the birth,
Who wait to pass hence from the prison of sense,
From the body and brain of earth?
Oh, why do you name the *living* dead,
Who think and act with the force
Of the LIGHT that from far, that from star to star
Moves on in its wondrous course?

The Progressiveness Life.

II

THE *Daily News* announced yesterday that I was going to preach on Temperance. What put such an idea into its head I cannot imagine. I am not going to do anything of the kind. *I cannot*. I may tell you in confidence that before my attention was called to the announcement, I had already prepared to-day's sermon; and there was not time enough to make a new one. So I shall have to go on, as I originally intended, with the subject I began last Sunday. I am afraid this will somewhat damage the *Daily News'* reputation for veracity. However, the unfulfilled prediction should serve as a useful warning. When will the papers learn only to prophesy *after* the event? So much for the *imaginary* sermon. I will now proceed with the real one

I am going to direct your attention to-day to the *development* which Common-Sense would teach us to anticipate in the superior environment of the spiritual world. Did you ever hear the following quaint quatrain of Tennyson ?—

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man;
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord, "Not yet; but make it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

"*I will let you a better*"—a more subtle and delicate organism. There is

a pretty story told of the prophet of Islam. An old woman once asked him if she would be saved. "Why," said he, "how can you? there will be no old women in heaven." Whereupon she began to weep. But he quickly consoled her by adding, "*There* they will be young again." "The Redeemed," Spenser says, "are all beautiful." And if you mean by the Redeemed the good, it must be so. *Even here* the soul is to some extent the sculptor of the body. As a rule, we have no difficulty in distinguishing at a glance a *villain*, a *philanthropist*, a *thinker*, a *blockhead*. But in this world the correspondence between soul and body is *anything but exact*. It is interfered with partly by the coarseness of the material which the spirit has to mould, and partly by other influences, such as heredity and climate, disease and old age. Beauty is often but skin deep. The gentlest, sweetest disposition is sometimes disguised by a face that is almost ugly. Hence the mistake we are so apt to make in the bestowal of our affections, the *mésalliances* which are productive of so large a proportion of the misery of life. But in the spiritual world, doubtless, the body will be the precise index of the soul. Outer form will perfectly correspond with inner development. Beauty in its various degrees will be, without exception, *soul-deep*. This idea is finely expressed by Spenser -

Every spirit, as it is more pure
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it a fairer body doth procure
To habit in,
For of the soul the body form doth take/
For soul is form and doth the body make.

"I will let you a better"—a more subtle and delicate organism: This implies, further, the expansion of our senses. We may, perhaps, acquire new ones, just as the embryo when born acquires the faculty of hearing and sight. Instead of touching the next world at five points—*hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling*—instead of touching the next world at five points, we may then touch it at a thousand. Or—what would come to pretty much the same thing—our present senses may be indefinitely developed. We are probably living, Goldwin Smith well says, in a universe of which we know as little as the mole knows of the world of vision. The mole, no doubt, imagines he perceives everything that is perceptible. And we are apt to delude ourselves in the same way. But there is nothing to warrant such a superstition. There is everything to disprove it. Our senses are strangely limited. I had almost said capriciously; but that would be a wrong word. The limitation cannot be capricious. There must be a *reason* for it, inexplicable though it seems. Possibly the crude material of the flesh cannot be more finely developed. Possibly a finer development is at present undesirable. Be the reason, however, what it may, the fact of the limitation is plain enough.

Take the case of sight. Examine the solar spectrum. At one end are the red rays ; there the ether vibrates 428 million million times a second. At the other end are the violet rays ; there it is vibrating 727 million million times a second. The remaining prismatic colours lie between, with more vibrations than the red and less vibrations than the violet. Outside these limits we see nothing. Beyond the red lie the heat rays, which we can feel. Beyond the violet lie the chemical or actinic rays, which we can only recognize by their effects. Now it is absurd to suppose that the heat rays or the chemical rays are *essentially* invisible, simply because we do not see them. It is absurd to suppose that the limit of vision is eternally fixed by the capacity of the human eye. No ! The universe must be full of beauty to which we are at present blind.

Or take the case of sound. The range of this faculty varies very much even among ourselves. The suddenness of the transition from perfect perception to a total want of it is very striking. You can try an experiment if you like. Collect a dozen or twenty people and *test them* with a series of small musical pipes. You will be amused by their expression of discomfiture as the sounds pass beyond the range of their hearing. Those who have enjoyed a momentary triumph will probably discover, in their turn, to how short a distance their little superiority extends. "Nothing can be more surprising," says Sir John Herschel, "than to find two persons, neither of whom is deaf, the one complaining of the penetrating shrillness of a sound, while the other declares that there is no sound at all." Some people can only just hear a note four octaves above the middle E of the pianoforte, others have a distinct perception of sound full two octaves higher. The chirrup of a sparrow is about the former limit, the cry of a bat an octave above it, and that of certain insects another octave. Professor Tyndall has told us that on one occasion when he was crossing the Wengern Alps with a friend, the grass at each side of the path swarmed with insects which seemed to rend the very air by their chirping ; yet his friend heard nothing. The insect music lay probably at the extreme limit of human audition. Sound, as you know, is caused by vibrations of the atmosphere, the number of vibrations corresponding to the shrillness of the note. In the highest note which a human ear can detect there are, according to Helmholtz, 38,000 vibrations per second. Beyond that all is *for us* silence. **FOR US.** But it is absurd to suppose that the limit of the audible is eternally fixed by the capacity of any human ear. No ! The universe is resonant with melody to which we are at present deaf. You know what Shakespeare says—

There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings ; . . .
Yet while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

"I will let you a better"—a more subtle and delicate organism. This implies, moreover, an expansion not only of the senses, but also of the higher faculties of the mind. Marvellous already have been the achievements of men of genius. Yet to themselves it seems as if they had accomplished *practically nothing*. You remember Socrates and the Delphic Oracle. You remember Newton and the pebbles. You remember the dying words of Goethe. You remember Tartini and that wonderful production of his which he called the Devil's sonata. It came to him one night in his sleep; but he could not recall it. What he wrote down, he asserted, bore but the faintest resemblance to the music of his dreams. "There is one word," said Lord Kelvin recently, "which characterises all my efforts for the advancement of science, and that word is—failure." But if life is continuous and progressive, if the kings of the earth—the royal thinkers of the race—take their glory and honour, their knowledge and ability, into that world where the mental faculties become expanded, they will find that what they modestly called failure was in reality the beginning of success.

"I will let you a better"—a more subtle and delicate organism—surrounded by a more helpful and encouraging environment. There is comfort in such an idea, let me point out in conclusion, not only for the man of genius, but also for the average man—ay, for the man, too, who is below the average. There is comfort not only for him who has failed relatively—failed to accomplish as much as he had hoped for the race—but also for him who has failed absolutely—failed to accomplish anything, even for himself. There is comfort for the man whose life, so far, has been a *fiasco*. Listen.

Yes, I have failed; that golden prize
Of life—*success*—ambitious boast,
Which dazzled once my boyish eyes,
I strove for, prayed for, and have lost.

Yet I may *not have lost* the prize,
It only may not yet be won;
I see, with dim and tearful eyes,
The goal may be still farther on.

That star again, like morning sun,
May rise upon some happier shore,
And where a nobler race is run
My Master bid me—try once more.

Retribution

I WILL give you four texts. The first from St. Paul, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The second from the Quaker Poet Whittier—

The tissue of the life to be
We weave in colours all our own;
And in the field of Destiny
We reap as we have sown.

The third from a lay sermon by Professor Huxley : "The happiness of every one of us, and more or less of those connected with us, depends upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more complex than that of chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages ; every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess board is the world ; the pieces are the phenomena of the universe ; the rules of the game are the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always *fair*, *just*, and *patient*. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well the highest stakes are paid, with that overflowing generosity which the strong delight to show ; and one who plays ill is checkmated, without haste, but without remorse."

This metaphor will probably remind you of the celebrated picture in which Retzsch depicted Satan playing at chess with a man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a *calm, strong* angel, who is playing for love, as we say, and who would rather lose than win, and I should accept it as an image of human life. The fourth, and the shortest, from Dr. M., "The Retribution of God is educative,"

Retribution means, as you know, paying back. Common usage generally restricts the term to the paying back of evil—a fact which is *curiously, sadly* suggestive of the badness of the human heart. As if no other payment mattered ! An honest paying back will of course include also the due recognition of good. Now, I want to make it clear to you that God's paying back—God's Retribution—is honest ; that there is nothing capricious about His rewards, nothing vindictive about His punishments. And I want further to make it clear to you that God's paying back—God's Retribution—is not an end in itself. It is a means. It has an ulterior purpose. It is educative. It is part of the great scheme by which good is brought out of evil, and better out of good, in perfect evolution.

Agas ago Pythagoras said, "No one but a beast would punish merely because evil had been done." Yet that is the kind of conduct

with which it has been customary to credit God. He has been pictured as a little King, seated on a little throne, surrounded by a little crowd of flattering courtiers, employing a little constabulary force to execute his unreasoning edicts. That is not *God*. God dwells not outside His universe, but within. He governs it not by *occasional, erratic, angry* interferences, but by absolutely unchanging Laws—Laws which are the expression of infinite wisdom and eternal Love.

Retribution is one of them. It is, in fact, but a particular form of the general law of cause and effect. Retribution—the punishment or reward of an action—is, so to speak, the kick of the gun, not an extra explosion arbitrarily thrown in. The *thief*, the *liar*, the *misanthrope*, the *drunkard*, the *poet*, the *philosopher*, the *hero*, the *saint*—all these find the return for what they *do* in what they *ARE*, in the elevation or degradation of their character, and in the consciousness that they are *in harmony*, or *out of harmony*, with their environment. There is no necessity for adventitious or miraculous accomplishments. To be *wise* and *pure* and *good* and *noble* is GLORY and BLESSEDNESS. To be *ignorant* and *corrupt* and *mean* and *feeble* is shame and horror. "In the weary satiety of the idle, in the healthy energy of honest labour, in the irritable temper of the selfish, in the serene peace of the benevolent, in the startling tortures of the soul where the passions have the mastery, in the calm Ellysium which succeeds their subjugation, there is surely sufficient Retribution."

A bad man, I admit, is sometimes so absorbed in his worldly affairs, his conscience is sometimes so seared, that he does not recognize his misery, but actually imagines himself to be happy. That is the worst condition of all. For such a man there is in store a terrible awakening. The longer his remorse is deferred, the more agonizing in the end must it become. How else should he be saved? How else should he obtain *even a desire* for goodness? "Retribution," says Emerson, "is often spread over a long time, and so is not at first distinct." "The excesses of youth," says Cotton, "are drafts upon old age payable *with interest* about thirty years after date." But whether the full punishment of wrong-doing comes sooner or later, whether it comes in this world or the next, it is as certain as the mercy of God. Yes. Punishment is the *last, best* proof of Love. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. *For* He desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live." And the desire of the Almighty is not likely to be frustrated.

Do a wrong deed, and though you flee on the pinions of the lightning the penalty will chase you through infinite space until you have paid its debt. Or rather, it will be with you—within you—all the while. It is part of the constitution with which God in His mercy has endowed you.

Divine retribution, then, whether of punishment or reward, arises

naturally from within us. It is not *arbitrarily* inflicted *from without*. This idea is well expressed both by the heterodox Byron and by the orthodox Milton. You remember the words of the dying Manfred to the fiend—

Back to thy hell !
 Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel ;
 Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know.
 What I have done is done ; I bear within
 A torture which could nothing gain from *thine* ;
 The mind which is immortal makes itself
 Requit for its good or evil deeds,
 Is its own origin of ill, and end,
 And its own place and time : its innate sense,
 When stripped of this mortality, derives
 No colour from the fleeting things without,
 But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

Similarly Milton—

The mind cannot be changed by place or time
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

This is true in the present world, and it will be just as true in the next. Heaven and hell, as I shall explain to you more fully another day, have nothing to do with place or time. They are as much about us here as they can ever be hereafter. *They are conditions of the soul.* It is not the outer abode, but the inner spirit, which renders our experience either painful or the reverse. Let me illustrate this—and with the illustration I will conclude—by an allegory. St. Peter was once called away a moment from the gate of the unseen world. An ecclesiastic undertook to supply his place, and to determine the future destiny of any who might arrive during the absence of St. Peter from his post. First there presented himself a man remarkable at once for the brilliance of his scientific achievements and for the gentleness and benevolence of his disposition. But, alas ! he was a heretic, and the clergyman ordered him to Hell. Arrived there, he was inexpressibly pained and shocked by the sights which met his gaze, and especially by a group of young children in torment ; so he set to work and applied his knowledge of chemistry to the devising of measures which would protect them from the flames. At once the whole scene changed. Beauty and happiness lay around him, and he found himself breathing the pure air, fanned by the gentle breezes of heaven. You understand how it was, don't you ? Having forgotten his personal suffering through sympathy with others, having devoted himself to the task of easing *their* pain, he was enveloped—*naturally, inevitably*—in the serenity and the joy that emanated from his own loving spirit. Another case came before our ecclesiastic. This time the man had lived a *lazy, useless* life, had been *mean, selfish, cruel*. But, as he had *believed* in the atoning blood and been a regular communicant, he was sent to heaven. And

what happened? No sooner was he seated—safely, as he thought—in bliss than he tried to peep over the golden wall into the pit of perdition, so that he might increase the relish of his favoured lot by contrasting it with the agonies of the lost. In an instant the *celestial* scenery was transformed into the *infernial*, and there radiated from his own evil nature the retributive fires of Hell.

Second Advent

FROM the time of Christ to the present day it has been a common belief that the Messiah would shortly reappear in the flesh, descending from heaven in the clouds, heralded by squadrons of angels, to the accompaniment of *falling stars, showers of blood and fire, and every kind of horror*; that He would raise the elect from their graves to share for a thousand years in the splendour of His earthly reign; and that He would summon the whole human race to His judgment-seat, and pass upon each the final sentence amidst a convulsed and dissolving universe.

The literature produced by this millennarian delusion, if heaped together, would make a pile as big as the largest of the Pyramids. Some years ago a man named Millar, with his definite assignment of the date of the approaching consummation, caused quite a panic in the United States. Prophets of a similar order have stirred up transient emotions in Germany. We have had Dr. Cumming and Mr. Baxter. All these Second Adventists, as they are called, keep their ears perpetually strained to catch the first blast of the archangel's trumpet. Every *earthquake, pestilence, thunderstorm, comet*, even an extraordinary *brilliance of the aurora borealis*,¹ startles them, as a possible *avant-courier* of the crack of doom. And as time goes on, and nothing happens, they become

*Impatient with the stars that keep their course,
And make no pathway for the coming Judge.*

How did this preposterous doctrine arise? To understand that, we must inquire into the origin and development of the Messianic idea. The Jews imagined themselves the favourites of the Almighty. By the covenant of Abraham, Jehovah, as they thought, had *entered into a contract* to be their Guardian. During the weary years of their captivity they solaced themselves with visions of a glorious future, when some Messiah would arise to overthrow the Gentiles and to establish the Lord's people in the land of Judæa. Such was the original conception of the Messiah. But by the time of Christ it had developed into something very different. It was gradually added to

¹ Even this year the negroes in South America were alarmed at the eclipse of the sun.

by religious faith, by national pride, by priestly ambition, and by suggestions derived from intercourse with Persia.

During this process of accretion the moral metaphors of prophecy were slowly transmuted into the material dogmas of Theology. Poetic figures came to be regarded as literal facts. Theologians—Jewish as well as Christian—have generally been a prosaic set of gentlemen. As a rule, they seem quite incapable of comprehending that there is such a thing as a figure of speech. Their craze for limitations is productive of the most fatal results—*everywhere, and especially here*. The Hebrew prophets were wont to employ the most daring possible imagery. For instance, Joel, in describing the calamities which would overtake the enemies of Israel *at no distant date*, says, "The day of the Lord cometh. I will show wonders in heaven and in earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." These expressions, which were merely intended to *typify* the appalling nature of the calamities foretold, hardened, under theological influence, into the belief that the coming of the Messiah would synchronize with the end of the world. Ezekiel, again, in depicting the return of the Jews from captivity, uses the metaphor of the coming to life of a heap of dry bones. This expression similarly *hardened* into a belief in a physical Resurrection, first of the chosen people, and second of all mankind. Thus by degrees the scene of the Messiah's triumph widened, and His jurisdiction was extended from the living to the dead. In the Book of Enoch, in the Talmud, in the Targums, we find the doctrine of the great Day of the Lord, which began with a poetic picture of the overthrow of the Gentiles before the walls of Jerusalem, transformed into an elaborate creed. The Messiah was to hold court in the valley of Jehoshaphat; He was to summon mankind to judgment; He was to instal the righteous *for a time* in an earthly Paradise, and *eventually* in heaven; and life was to submerge the wicked in a storm of blazing brimstone, while heaven and earth dissolved in darkness and in blood.

This was the creed in which the apostles had been brought up. These were the things which they expected the Messiah to do. They believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Yet He had been put to death. *Therefore*, they argued, He must come again to complete His unfinished work. You see the Christianity of the early disciples was just Judaism, *plus* the conviction that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. The first converts to Christianity, like the rest of their countrymen, looked for a warrior King. And so it was inevitable that they should misunderstand Christ's meaning, that they should fail to realize the *spirituality* of His aims. When He Himself spoke of the Messiahship, He used the common imagery of the prophets. For example, in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, He said, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; the stars shall fall, and the

powers of heaven shall be shaken." And proceeding in the same figurative style, He added, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. And He shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet to gather together His elect. And He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations." The apostles interpreted this in the sense to which they had been previously accustomed. But that was not Christ's meaning. Just think, for a moment, *what different meanings* identical words may have. When a Broad Churchman speaks of the *Atonement*, the *Incarnation*, or the *Trinity*, you do not surely imagine that he is using those terms in the same way as an Evangelical! If any one says that the sun is rising or setting, it would be rash to assume that he had never heard of Copernicus. And why should you think that Christ expected His words to be *literally* fulfilled? Such a supposition is flatly contradicted by the whole tenor of His teaching and His life, and it is absolutely irreconcilable with the idea of His being in any degree inspired.

First, I say, the supposition that Christ expected His words to be literally fulfilled is flatly contradicted by the whole tenor of His teaching and His life. On one occasion, for example, He perceived that the multitude were going to take him by force and make Him a King. What did He do? Did He hail it as a sign that they had understood Him? No! He departed into a mountain alone. "My Kingdom is not of this world," He said. "The Kingdom of God is," He said—*where*? In Judæa, where the Jews expected it to be? No! "The Kingdom of God is within you." The Pharisees asked Him *when* the Kingdom of God would come. He replied, "It cometh not with observation." How could He have said more plainly that the language which He had applied to it was *figurative*; that the *darkened sun*, the *falling stars*, the *sign in the clouds*, the *angels*, the *trumpet*, the *throne*, the *great conclave*, were *metaphors*; that the Kingdom of God would come, not in *outward*, *visual* wonders, but in *inward*, *spiritual* experience?

And secondly, the supposition that Christ expected His words to be *literally* fulfilled is irreconcilable with the idea of His being in any degree inspired. For they were *not* so fulfilled. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the new Religion spread over the world. But there was no reappearance of Christ in the flesh. "The time," He said, "is at hand; yea, some of those standing here shall not taste death till all these things come to pass." If His prophecy bore a *moral sense*, the sequel justified it; if it bore a *physical sense*, the sequel falsified it. That generation passed away; fifty generations have since passed away; but there has been no literal Second Advent. It follows, therefore, that unless we give His words a *metaphorical* interpretation, we practically accuse Him of being a false prophet.

By the second coming of the Messiah you are to understand the coming of *His influence* into men's hearts and lives. At times, no doubt, this is preceded by some great calamity, some terrible social crisis. When *selfishness* and *vice* and *tyranny* have grown rampant, there is required a *catastrophe* to sweep them aside and prepare the way of the Lord. Thus not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but the fall of Rome, the French Revolution, and all similar events have been harbingers of His coming. But whether preceded by such a catastrophe or not, whether occurring to an individual or to a nation, Christ's coming is always *spiritual*. Every acceptance of His presence every recognition of His authority, every advancement of His Religion, is an Advent of the Son of Man. Jesus is for ever coming again, not in physical horror, but in moral triumph ; not in convulsions of nature, but in conversion of heart ; not in the ghastly melodrama of a dissolving universe, but *in the still small voice of conscience and in the silent growth of love.*

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee
Thy soul is all forlorn.

The cross on Calvary
Will never save thy soul ;

The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

Thus Jesus comes again,
Not in strange, wild alarms,
But when His Holy Spirit
Thy wayward spirit charms.

The End of the World

THE extraordinary delusion that Christ, would reappear in the flesh I dealt with last Sunday—so far as it concerns the second coming. To-day we will look at it in its relation to the end of the world. Here, too, we shall find that the mistake arose from a misunderstanding and corruption of the Messianic idea. Let us see.

The Hebrews believed themselves to be the only accepted worshippers of the Almighty. They were thus sharply distinguished, as they thought, from other races—from the uncircumcised idolaters, who were at once the enemies of God and of His people. This contrast and hostility they even carried over into the unseen world. Every nation, they fancied, had its guardian angel in the Court of Jehovah to watch over its interests ; and they flattered themselves that *their own* angel—Michael—was more powerful and nearer to the throne, than any of the rest. In the calamities that befell them they recognized the vengeance of Jehovah for the violation of His commands. In their victories and deliverances they saw the superiority of their God, and His distinct partiality for Jews. He had, as they piously believed, commissioned them to subdue and govern all the other races of the earth. *This sentiment was the very essence of their religion.*

When their proud and cherished faith was baffled of fulfilment, they never dreamed of abandoning it. They only supposed that its fulfilment was postponed, and they looked forward with redoubled ardour to the time when their hopes would break into fruition. Misfortunes and woes were heaped upon them. Their city was sacked; their Temple desecrated; they were forbidden to celebrate the rites of their Religion; they were dragged into slavery by the *Persians*, the *Syrians*, the *Greeks*, the *Romans*; they were slaughtered wholesale. All this did but fan the flame of hope. Their hatred and scorn of the heathen, their faith in their own incomparable destiny, their expectation of a Messiah who would avenge them and vindicate their trust, became more fervent and profound in proportion as fulfilment was delayed. And when at last fulfilment did begin to seem hopeless amid the conditions of the present world, the scene of the future triumph was changed. Instead of a temporal Deliverer, who would overthrow the Gentiles and establish the Lord's people in undisturbed possession of Judæa, the Messiah came to be represented as the central figure of a battle and a judgment, in which the dead as well as the living would take part, and which would culminate in the destruction of the heavens and the earth and their replacement by a new creation.

A great many of the details in this developed doctrine—especially those which refer to the end of the world—were derived from the theology of the Persians. Once adopted, the Jews tried to find support for them in their own Scriptures. Now, as a matter of fact, the Old Testament does not teach anything of the kind, and yet the Doctors of Divinity made up their minds that it did. I will tell you how this happened. Oriental writers generally, and the Hebrew prophets in particular, were accustomed, when they described any great calamity, to employ the most portentous and appalling imagery. For instance, Isaiah, in foretelling the destruction of Idumæa, says, "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, the firmament shall be rolled up as a scroll, and the stars shall fall as a leaf falleth from the vine, for my sword shall be upon Idumæa, I will make a great slaughter in the land." Joel, in foretelling nothing worse than a plague of locusts, says, "The earth shall quake, the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." In process of time these symbols hardened into facts. Their metaphorical meaning was lost sight of, and they were accepted in the baldest literality. In most cases—as in those I quoted—the event to which the words were intended to apply was actually specified, and the time of its occurrence was precisely fixed. Nevertheless, when the Messianic Advent was delayed, when the prospect of its fulfilment receded farther and farther into the distance, when at last the faithful began to think that they must be content to wait for it until the present system of things was about to be swept away, we need not be surprised to find that the prophetic

metaphors were detached from their context, denuded of their local and temporal signification, and interpreted as predictions of a dissolution of Nature heralding the approach of the Messiah.

This mistaken interpretation was universally adopted in the time of Christ. And in consequence even the apostles fatally misunderstood Him. When, in predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, He used the old prophetic imagery, they fancied that He was predicting the destruction of the world. Jerusalem fell and the world remained intact; but the apostles continued to live in hourly expectation of the great catastrophe. And so we read, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. *Then we who are alive* shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet Him in the air." And again, "The heavens and the earth are reserved into fire at the day of judgment. The day of the Lord shall come *as a thief in the night*; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up."

Two thousand years have passed and yet the world survives. *When* and *what* will the end be? On this point Science at present has nothing very definite to tell us. The earth is gradually growing cooler, and in course of time life will become extinct.

The same thing will by-and-by happen to the rest of the planets, and even to the sun itself. That might be the end. *But* since the heavenly bodies are subjected to a slight resistance in their passage through the ether—a resistance which retards them in their course—it is probable that all the members of the solar system will eventually collide, and their collision would fuse them into vapour. That might be the end. *But once more*, since our planetary system was originally developed out of just such a mass of vapour, the chances are that the whole process of Evolution will be repeated over again, and so the end will be but a new beginning.

What a difference between the ecclesiastical doctrine and the scientific! The one makes the end of the world an arbitrary act of vengeance. The other represents it as resulting *inevitably* from the laws of nature—laws which are the expression of wisdom and of love. The one is a doctrine of horror. At any moment we may be burnt alive. The other can be contemplated without fear. The climax is so infinitely remote that when it comes it can injure nobody. Whatever the end be—whether the planets are frozen, or whether they evaporate in heat, or whether they are used as the raw material of new planets—long before that they will have ceased to be the abodes of life. And when our own little system has run its appointed course, other worlds will be going through the same process of Evolution—a process, which, for aught we know, may be eternal. But if not, if the whole material universe is destined to be eventually annihilated,

it will have served its purpose as the seminary of souls. After all, matter, at the best, is but the minister of mind. And there may come a time when its services will no longer be required. The one germ of truth concealed in the ecclesiastical doctrine is latent also in the scientific. It is this: "The things which are seen are temporal; they are continually changing; for ever assuming new forms, perhaps passing out of existence altogether. The invisible alone is eternal. Souls are the only permanencies.

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river—
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.

What of it! Nature may perish, but human nature shall endure; for when its physical training has been accomplished, the spirit will have entered into the spiritual sphere.

The Day of Judgment

THE extraordinary delusion that the Messiah would shortly reappear in the flesh I have already dealt with so far as it concerns the *Second Advent* and the End of the World. To-day we will look at it in its *relation to the day of judgment*.

Strictly speaking, the divine jurisdiction is latent in the structure of the soul. The mind of man is the Creator's Judgment-seat. Everything we do carries with it its own immediate retribution. The judgments of God are *continuous*, not *catastrophic*. They are neither more nor less than the *reaction* of our conduct upon ourselves. Retribution, as I said the other day, is but a *particular case* of the general law of cause and effect. The *punishment or reward* of an action is, so to speak, the kick of the gun—not an extra explosion arbitrarily thrown in. The *thief*, the *liar*, the *misanthrope*, the *drunkard*, the *poet*, the *philosopher*, the *hero*, the *saint*—all these find a return for what they do in what they are—in the *elevation or degradation* of their character, and in the consciousness that they are in *harmony* or out of *harmony* with their environment. And since the law of Retribution is *instantaneous* and *incessant* in its operation, there can be no occasion for a final epoch to redress its accumulated disbalancements. It has no disbalancements save in our defective vision. If we could see things as God sees them, we should discover that the deserts and receipts of all men were adjusted between the rising and the setting of the sun. Every day is a day of judgment. There is one day, however, which may be regarded as pre-eminently THE Day of Judgment, and that is the day of death. For two reasons—(1) the sum total of our earthly

life is then added up. It cannot be further altered. It passes into history as a collective cause, as a distinct unit of influence. It will for ever tell its good or evil tale of us. And (2) as we leave off here we must begin there. Our character is not changed by the great transition. Immediately *after* Death it will be just what it was immediately *before*. Death, therefore, will determine for each of us our *position* beyond the veil. But in this there is nothing *miraculous*, nothing *adventitious*, nothing *melodramatic*. It is the *natural*, *inevitable* result of the laws of the universe—laws which are the expression of a Will in which there is no variableness, not even the shadow of a change. *That is the true doctrine of Judgment.*

Here—as with the Second Advent and the End of the World—the false doctrine arose from a misunderstanding of metaphor, from taking literally *mere figures of speech*. The Hebrew prophets were accustomed, as I have already pointed out, in describing any great calamity, to employ the most portentous and appalling imagery. And Christ, in predicting the disasters that would attend the destruction of Jerusalem, adopted the familiar metaphors. “There shall be great tribulation,” He said; “the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” And He went on, in the same poetic strain, to predict the subsequent triumph of Christianity. “Then,” He said, “shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. And He shall send His angels to gather together His elect. And He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate the righteous from the wicked.” It was a symbolical representation of the coming of His spiritual Kingdom. Identifying Himself with the truths which He taught, He declared that He would come again. These truths would eventually find acceptance. His voice would, in effect, be heard from the judgment-seat of conscience. And by the powers which He had enunciated—*His golden rule, His new commandment, His law of service*—men would be either self-acquitted or self-condemned. That was Christ’s meaning. But no one understood Him. The spiritual signification of the metaphor was lost sight of in its physical setting. The trope was regarded as a truth—even by his own disciples. They had been indoctrinated with the perverted ideas of the Messiahship which were current in their time. We have seen how these ideas arose. At first the Jews expected nothing more than a temporal Deliverer who would establish them in undisturbed possession of Judæa. But year after year, century after century, He delayed His coming. Misfortunes and woes were heaped upon them; their city was sacked; their Temple desecrated; they themselves were carried into captivity by *Persians, Syrians, Greeks, Romans*; and at last the faithful began to think that their expectations would never be realized amid the present conditions of the world.

Then the time and place of the future triumph were changed. The Messiah came to be represented as the central figure of a battle and a judgment, in which the dead as well as the living would take part ; in which not only the local enemies of the chosen people but the whole Gentile world would be put to everlasting shame, while heaven and earth passed away to make room for a new creation—the exclusive abode of the elect. This was the Messiah of the Apostles' dreams. These were the things which Jesus, as they thought, had actually promised to do. Yet he had been put to death. *Therefore*, they argued, He must come again to complete His unfinished work. And when He did not come again, when the world continued in its usual course, when the scenic tribunal failed to be set up, instead of saying to themselves, We were wrong in expecting the *literal accomplishment* of the Saviour's words, they merely said, We were wrong as to the date, and they continued to live in hourly expectation of the great catastrophe.

The picture of the last judgment grew ever more *lurid* and *terrific*. In the paintings with which Michael Angelo has covered the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Christ is represented as a *towering, raging athlete*, hurling thunderbolts at His victims, who lie huddled together—a *seething, writhing* mass. In the days of the Inquisition it was customary to depict the judgment under the figure of an *auto-da-fe*—Christ the Grand Inquisitor, seated on a throne, His familiars standing by with instruments of torture, His sign—the cross—stretching from hell to heaven in the sight of the assembled universe, while the heretics stood tremblingly before him, awaiting their horrid doom.

The heretics ? Yes ! The heretics. That was the crowning blasphemy. "*Was*," did I say ? Alas ! I must say "*Is*." Men still tell us that our fate will depend on our theology. To the orthodox at the great assize the Judge will say, You may have been *dishonest, untruthful, cruel, brutal*, but you believed in Me and in My blood, therefore you are blessed. To the heterodox He will say, You may have fulfilled every duty, you may have been *kind, self-sacrificing, ready to lay down your life for the world*, but you have not believed in My divinity, therefore you are cursed. Such is a fit verdict to be pronounced by the avenging warrior in the Apocalypse, from whose mouth issues a two-edged sword, whose eyes are flames of fire, who rides forth on his white charger, in a vesture dipped in gore, treading down his enemies in the wine-press of his wrath, until their blood reaches to the very bridle. It was the natural reflection of an age steeped in the most murderous hatred and persecution. But how contrary to the Saviour's teaching ! How utterly irreconcilable with the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus ! He came, He said, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. He modestly deprecated all personal honour, asking, "Why callest thou Me good ?" He sat

at meat with publicans and harlots. In His death agony He pardoned and prayed for His murderers. His teaching and His life may be summed up in the one word—Love.

Oh, the horror of it! The *gentlest, tenderest, sweetest* of all human beings has been metamorphosed by Theology into a fiend.

Face loved of little children long ago!
Head hated of the priests and rulers then!
Say, was not this Thy passion? To foreknow
In Thy death's hour the *thoughts* of Christian men.

O Jesus! Thou Man of Sorrows! Thou hast been crucified afresh by Thy disciples. Thou hast been put to open shame by those who call themselves Thy friends. Is there no voice to speak in Thy defence? One Thou canst count upon—weak and stammering, but it will be true to Thee—*hatred, contempt, persecution, failure, death* notwithstanding. Come what come may, though all men traduce Thee, yet will not I.

Heaven

IN the crude fancy of mankind heaven was conceived of as a material abode—an elysian clime on the surface of the earth, or a happy isle beyond the setting sun, or some halcyon spot above the firmament, curtained in splendour and crowded with—with good things. In this local habitation God was supposed to be visibly enthroned. He was pictured as a sort of Sultan—only more gorgeously appalled, more powerful, more vindictive, more full of whims. And of course in primitive theology, the conditions of admittance into heaven were represented as *arbitrary* and *despotic*. The plan of Salvation was but a court intrigue. A sultan's favourites are not generally the best of his subjects; on the contrary, they are very often the worst. The surest means of winning his favour are artifice, flattery, hypocrisy, compliance with his caprice. And God, it was thought, must be similarly propitiated—by the performance of ceremonies, by the repetition of shibboleths, by the profession of beliefs, or by some other equally *external* formality. The infinite Sultan was supposed to be as indifferent to character as His finite prototype. Character! Pshaw! It was the last thing men dreamed of as a passport to heaven.

And at different times the theology of Christendom has been more or less tainted with these savage notions. But surely, on reflection, their absurdity—or rather, should I not say, their blasphemy?—must become apparent. The infinite Spirit is not confined in a local dwelling-place. He is not seated on the apex of the universe, to

be encountered only by those who *literally* journey thither. He is *omnipresent, immanent, underlying, pervading, containing* all things.

Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands or feet.

The laws of Nature and of human nature are the expression of His will ; and by their *instrumentality* He is for ever administering *perfect justice* and *perfect mercy* to every living soul. To conform to His will is to be happy. God is everywhere, and therefore heaven is everywhere—for the spirits who recognize and obey Him. Everywhere may be realized that serenity of life which results from the correspondence of the soul with its divinely appointed destiny. Wherever the inward states and the outward conditions are so adjusted as to produce a sense of harmony, *there* is heaven. And this adjustment can only be effected by ourselves. Heaven cannot be made for us. It must be made by us. *It grows out of our own free choice.* It is the consciousness that we are fulfilling the purpose of our existence. It is not a locality, but a condition ; not an outward environment, but an inward experience. No mere place of abode, however agreeable, could be heaven *to a discordant soul* ; for heaven is harmony. It can only be found within.

'Tis heaven must come, not we must go.

Christ said, you remember, to the young ruler, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." And He spoke of Himself as the Son of man who is in heaven—*not was, not will be, but is*. In these and similar passages it is manifest that the Saviour could not have been thinking of heaven as a place. He meant by it a state of character. Man is not to be saved by moral artifice, by sacrilegious subterfuges, by the quibble of imputed righteousness. Paradise will never be gained by a trick. *Salvation is obedience* : that and nothing more ; that and nothing less. True, we are saved through Christ. But how ? Not by the technical belief that He shed His blood for us, but by catching His spirit and becoming ready to shed our blood for others. "The same mind must be in us which was also in Christ Jesus." That is the will of God. That is the purpose of our existence, and the realization of it is heaven.

The realization of it is heaven—whether before or after death. Whatever changes await the soul, whatever be the relation of the spiritual entity to its new home, it can be in Paradise, it can command peace and bliss, only by harmonizing with the divine system of existence in which it has its being. That is the one essential condition—*universally, eternally* essential. *But*, the term heaven may be legitimately applied *in a special sense* to the spiritual world. Not

that God is more present there. Only He will be more apparent. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Understanding Him more perfectly, we shall be enabled to render the more perfect obedience. No doubt the physical body is necessary for the earlier stages of our education. But it often seems to be a hindrance rather than a help. In it we are "cribbed, cabined, and confined." "To will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good we know not." We are capable of higher things than we can ever achieve until we are endowed with a spiritual body and surrounded with a spiritual environment. And, because it is the sphere of that higher achievement, the spiritual world may be emphatically called heaven. There are people who look forward to a future of *repose, idleness, irresponsibility*. That would not be heaven. No! The life *THERE* is at once a *continuation and a development* of the life *HERE*. Beyond the grave is awaiting us *harder work, better service, a nobler career*.

Let me read you a little poem. It is about the porter at a House of Mercy in the middle ages, when the plague and leprosy were rife—

Piero Luca, known of all the town
As the grey *porter* by the Pitti wall,
Where the noon shadows of the gardens fall,
Sick and in dolour, waited to lay down
His last sad burden; and beside his mat
The barefoot monk of La Certosa sat.

Unseen, in square and blossoming garden drifted
Soft sunset lights through green Val d'Arno sifted.
Unheard, *below*, the living shuttles shifted
Backward and forth, and wove, in love or strife,
In mirth or grief, the mottled web of life.
But when at last came upward from the street
Tinkle of bell and tread of measured feet,
The sick man started, strove to rise in vain,
Sinking back heavily with a moan of pain.
And the monk said, "'Tis but the Brotherhood
Of mercy going on some errand good.
Their black masks by the palace wall I see."
Piero answered faintly, "Woe is me!
This day, for the first time in forty years,
In vain the bell hath sounded in my ears,
Calling me with my brethren of the mask,
Beggard and prince alike, to some new task
Of love or pity—haply from the street
To bear a wretch plague-stricken, or, with feet
Hushed to the quickened ear and feverish brain
To tread the crowded lazaretto's floors
Down the long twilight of the corridors,
Moist tossing arms and faces full of pain.
I loved the work. It was its own reward;
I never counted on it to off-set
My many, many sins, or make less my debt
To the free grace and mercy of our Lord.
But somehow, father, it has come to be
In these long years so much a part of me,
I should not know myself if lacking it,
But with the work the workers too would die,
And in my place some other self would sit,
Joyful or sad—what matters, if not I?

And now all's over. Woe is me!" "My son,"
 The monk said soothingly, "thy *work* is done.
 And, no more as a servant, but the guest
 Of God, thou ent'rest thy eternal rest.
 No toil, no tears, no sorrow for the lost,
 Shall mar thy perfect bliss. Thou shalt sit down
 Clad in white robes, and wear a golden crown,
 For ever and for ever." Piero tossed
 On his sick pillow: "Miserable me,
 I am too poor for such grand company.
 The crown would be too heavy for this grey
 Old head; and, God forgive me if I say,
 It would be hard to sit there night and day
 Like statue in the Tribune, doing naught
 With these hard hands, that all my life have wrought
 Not for bread only, but for pity's sake.
 I'm dull at prayers. I could not keep awake
 Counting my beads. Mine's but a crazy *head*,
 Scarce worth the saving *if all else be dead*.
 And if one goes to heaven without a heart,
 Surely he leaves behind the better part.
 I love my fellow-men. The worst I know
 I would be good to. Will death *change* me so
 That I shall sit among the lazy saints
 And turn a deaf ear to the sore complaints
 Of souls that suffered? Why, I never yet
 Left e'en a dog in danger hard beset,
 Or ass o'erladen! Must I rate man less
 Than dog or ass, in *heavenly* selfishness?
 Methinks (Lord, pardon if the thought be sin!)
 The world of pain were *better*, if therein
 Our hearts might still be human, and desires
 Of natural pity drop upon its fires
 Some cooling tears."

Thereat the pale monk crossed
 His brow, and muttering, "Madman, thou art lost!"
 Took up his pyx and fled. When left alone,
 The sick man closed his eyes, with a deep groan,
 That sank into the prayer, "Thy will be done."
 Then was he made aware, by soul or ear,
 Of somewhat pure and holy bending o'er him,
 And of a voice like that of her who bore him,
 Tender and most compassionate, "Never fear;
 For heaven is love as God Himself is love.
 Thy work below *shall be* thy work above."
 And when he looked, lo! in the stern monk's place
 He saw the shining of the dear Christ's face.

Hell

I

WHAT IT IS NOT

PEOPLE used to think of hell as a material prison, where the damned would be eternally tormented in flames of fire and brimstone. It was the most terrible of all the superstitions of the world. Even yet it is not quite dead; and at some time or other it has been authoritatively taught by every Church and sect in Christendom. Mr. Spur-

geon says : " There is a real fire in hell. Thy body shall be suffused with agony ; thy head tormented with racking pains ; thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe ; thine ears tortured with horrid sounds ; thy heart beating high with fever ; thy pulse rattling with anguish ; thy limbs crackling in the flame : every vein a pathway for the feet of fire to tread ; every nerve a string on which the devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament."

There is an awful book—written, sad to say, for children—by the Rev. Father Furniss, and entitled " A Night of Hell." " Look at that girl," he says ; " what a terrible dress she has on ! It is made of fire. She wears a bonnet of fire which is pressed down all over her head. It scorches the skull and melts the brain. See, she is on fire from head to foot. If she were here she would be burnt to death in a moment. But she is in hell, where fire burns but does not kill. Look at that boy. Listen. There is a sound like a boiling kettle. What does it mean ? It means this. The blood is boiling in the boy's veins. The brains are boiling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones." Having thus dealt with the roasting and boiling processes of hell, the Rev. Father proceeds to give a description of a baby being baked. " Hear how it screams," he says. " See how it twists itself about. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet upon the floor. On its face is an expression of the most appalling despair."

Jeremy Taylor, a bishop of our own Church, speaks as follows : " In hell every sense and organ shall be assailed for ever with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings. We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull ; but that was joy in comparison with the fire of hell." Another English clergyman—Joseph Traff by name—wrote a poem on the subject, from which I will read you an extract—

Doomed to live on and never to expire,
In floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
The damned shall groan—fire of all kinds and forms,
In rain and hail and hurricanes and storms,
Liquid and solid, livid, red, and pale,
A flaming mountain here, and there a flaming vale,
The liquid fire makes seas ; the solid, shores ;
Arched o'er with flames, the horrid concave roars
In bubbling eddies rolls the fiery tide,
And sulphurous surges on each other ride.
The hollow winding vaults and dens and caves
Bellow like furnaces with flaming waves.
Pillars of flame in spiral volumes rise
Like fiery snakes, and lick the infernal skies.

You say, perhaps, people have given up the idea of *literal* fire and of *physical* torture. Well, I don't know that anything is gained by

that. *Mental* suffering may be less repellent to the imagination than physical ; but it is just as hard to bear—probably harder. Even in this form the popular doctrine of hell will not bear a moment's investigation.

To begin with, it represents men as being damned, not for *individual*, but for *original* sin. By original sin is meant sin transmitted from Adam to his descendants. But it is impossible for sin to be transmitted. Guilt is not transferable. One person cannot sin for another. You, for instance, can no more sin for me than you can—eat for me. Wrong-doing, like right-doing, must be the result of deliberate choice. And, therefore, to maintain that God condemned *all* men to eternal torment for a single act of *one* of them is to maintain that He is unjust. Theologians sometimes think to evade this conclusion by supposing that what we inherit from Adam is, not his guilt, but his depravity. This supposition, however, does not mend matters in the least. If Adam transmitted to his descendants an *irresistible tendency* to evil, they are bound to sin. And it would be just as wicked to punish a man eternally for what he cannot help doing as to punish him eternally for what he has not done at all.

However, waiving the silly doctrine of original sin and total depravity, let us assume that men are punished in hell for sins which they have personally committed and which it was in their power to avoid. Even in this form the doctrine remains immoral. There is a pretty oriental apologue to the following effect : God once permitted Zorach to accompany Him on a visit to the dwelling-place of the damned. There the prophet saw a man who had lost his right foot. He asked God the meaning of it. God replied, "He was a king who in his whole life did but a single kind action. One day he passed a dromedary which was tied up and was vainly trying to get at some fodder placed just beyond its utmost effort. The king with his right foot compassionately kicked the fodder within the poor beast's reach. The foot," said God, "I placed in heaven. The rest of him is here." The Almighty cannot be less just than that. But the popular doctrine of hell flagrantly violates the most elementary principles of justice. For (1) it punishes every man alike ; and (2) in each case the punishment is out of all proportion to the sin. First, I say, it punishes every man alike. It inflicts on everybody the same indiscriminating damnation. The degrees of guilt amongst men are infinitely varied. But in the orthodox hell there are no degrees of retribution. A child guilty of an equivocation through fear is put on a par with profligates and cut-throats. Were a human judge to pass the same sentence on a trifling misdemeanour as he passed on the most stupendous crime, he would be regarded as a lunatic and dismissed from the Bench. And is such a travesty of justice to be attributed to the Judge of all the earth ? Secondly,

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according to the popular hell, the punishment is in every case—even in the very worst—out of all proportion to the offence. There is no sort of correspondence between a few years of sin and an eternity of anguish. If a child were commanded to hold its breath for thirty seconds, and failing to do so, were confined in a loathsome dungeon and flogged incessantly for the rest of its life, that would be fair—nay merciful—in comparison with condemning to eternal torment the most abandoned wretch that ever lived for all the sins he could possibly have committed in threescore years and ten. And think of passing such a sentence on a man who had struggled hard against temptation, yielded but rarely, repented in sackcloth and ashes, and died committing his soul to God.

The popular doctrine of Hell, then, is unjust and immoral. Indeed these are but feeble terms in which to characterize it. Let me read you a few more quotations from so-called Christian theologians. "God is in hell to keep the tortures of the damned freshly plied, and to see that no one escapes for ever. He is furious. He calls out all His forces, of which the leader and general is Rage. God is so provoked with sinners that He will crush their blood out of them, and His garments will be saturated with gore. Reprobate infants are vipers of vengeance which Jehovah will hold over the flames in the tongues of His wrath, till they writhe up and cast their venom in His face. If mortal men kill the body temporarily in *their* anger, it is but natural that the immortal God should damn the soul eternally in *His*. You cannot stand an instant even before an infuriated tiger; what, then, will you do when God rushes on you in His wrath?" The last two sentences are from Jonathan Edwards. He compares his Deity, you see, to a tiger and to a murderer. The comparisons are *inadequate*. The brutality of all the tigers, all the murderers, all the devils in the world *pales into insignificance* before the brutality of the God of the orthodox hell. He is the very wickedest being which it is possible for the human mind to conceive.

Worship a thing like that! not I. I am not such a craven cur. Be it imaginary or be it real, I will scout it to its face. Do thy worst, thou foul fiend! Thou mayest *torture*, but thou shalt never *conquer* me. Plunge me into thy deepest, hottest hell, and it will but increase my scorn. I warn thee, for every paroxysm of unmerited anguish which thou inflictest, I will hold thee up before the universe as an object of loathing and contempt.

Hell

II

WHAT IT IS

I POINTED out to you last week that the popular conception of hell was a vulgar and blasphemous superstition. Perhaps you went away asking what I proposed to put in its place. You may have said to yourselves that a doctrine which had played such a tremendous part in the History of the world, must contain an element of truth. You may have called to mind the words of Shakespeare—

There is a soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out.

Quite so. Having, therefore, torn away the frightful envelope of superstition, let us proceed to inquire what is the reality implied in the word "Hell."

Now, it is impossible to believe that God has two systems of government—one for this world, and another for the next. That would make Him a changeable Being, with varying moods and methods. If we want to know what will happen after death, we must find out what happens before. If we want to know how sinners will be punished hereafter, we must discover how they are punished here. If we want to know anything about the hell of the future, we must study the hell of the present.

Let us ask, then, How does God punish offenders here? And, first of all, who are offenders? What is evil? I will try and make this clear. Supposing that there were only one living creature in existence, and that it possessed only one faculty, its good would consist in the exercise of its faculty, its evil in any interference with that exercise. But the moment a creature is set in relation to other creatures, and made aware of various gradations of importance among its own interior faculties, good and evil become likewise complex. Exercising its faculties, fulfilling its functions, gratifying its desires, is not enough. This must be done all the while with due regard to their relative importance. Thus alone is it possible to secure the full fruition of life. Now, the lowest function of man is a momentary gratification of sense, as, for example, in eating and drinking. His highest function is surrender to the universal order, sympathetic identification of himself with the wellbeing of the whole. Between these two extremes there are any number of intermediate stages, rising in worth from the titillation of a pinch of snuff to the thrill imparted by the imaginary contemplation of redeemed humanity a million years from now. And throughout the entire range, when-

ever the choice of a lesser good involves the rejection of a greater, whenever obedience to a lower motive involves disobedience to a higher, whenever the pursuit of a personal interest involves injury to others—there is evil, and there is Hell.

Hell ? Yes. For what is Hell but God's punishment of the guilty ? And how does He punish the guilty ? Being what He is, there is only one way in which He *can* punish them. As I have explained before, He rules the world from within. He governs it, not by *occasional, erratic, vicious* interferences, but by the absolutely unchangeable laws which are the expression of His eternal Will. Retribution is one of them. It is, in fact, but a particular case of the law of cause and effect. The punishment of an action is, so to speak, the kick of the gun, not an extra explosion arbitrarily thrown in. If any one commits a crime, God does not hurl him over a precipice, or strike him dead with lightning, or fling him into a furnace. No ! He retains His divine serenity. He never thinks of interrupting His established method of procedure. He just leaves the offender to the reaction of his act, to the consequences of his conduct, to the vileness of his passions, to the reproaches of his conscience, to the torture of his perverted being. The hell of the sinner is the atmosphere of his own degradation. And what fitter Hell could there be ?

Here is a man who has an abnormal craving for opium. He yields and yields and yields until the temptation completely masters him. Gradually his nervous system becomes a mass of torment, and his once royal powers of mind give place to imbecility. Is he not *body and soul* in hell ? Look at that miser. He elevates his love of money above a thousand nobler claims. He knows nothing of the grandest ranges of the universe, nothing of the sweetest delights of humanity. *Bent, ill-clad, ill-fed, self-neglected, despised by everybody, dwelling alone in a squalid garret, afraid of men, afraid of God, afraid of death*, who could wish, who could imagine, anything worse for him ? His odious experience constitutes in very truth a Hell. Or, to take one more illustration, when a burglar breaks into a bank and bears off its treasure, scattering dismay and ruin among innumerable families, he exalts the narrow principle of his selfish desire over the broad principle of public welfare ; he sets the petty good of his personal enrichment above the weighty good represented by that respect for property which is essential to the life of the community. What is the result ? Why, this : the fear of detection, the condemnation of his conscience, the sense of hostility between himself and society combine to make up an experience that can be described by no milder term than hellish.

Well, then, will you please remember for the future three things. *First*, Hell is not a material locality, but a spiritual condition ; not an outward abode, but an inward state ; not the place to which we

go, but an experience which comes to us. It is the rebound of violated law. It is the misadjustment of life to the true conditions of being. It is discord between the part and the whole. It is the opposition of the individual to the universal order. It is the antagonism of the soul to God. And consequently we may be as much in hell *here and now* as we ever can be anywhere. *Secondly*, Hell is a thing of endless varieties and degrees. So far from being the same for all, it is different for each. Its keenness for any man will depend upon the measure of his antagonism to the will of God. Hell is pain in the senses, slavery in the will, confusion in the intellect, remorse in the conscience, *doubt, hate, and fear* in the heart. There is hell for one in the remembrance of what he was, for another in the thought of what he might have been, for a third in the knowledge of what he is. Every man's hell is as idiosyncratic as his soul and its contents. *Thirdly*, and this is my chief point, Hell is not vindictive, but educative. It implies not rage, but pity. It is the remedial struggle of nature and of grace to restore a perverted being to its normal state. If you put your finger in the fire the pain which follows is not vengeance. It is a warning, a lesson essential to your preservation. When some frightful disease attacks a man, the agony and convulsions into which he is thrown are but the spring of his constitution upon the enemy, a desperate attempt to shake off its grasp and restore the organism to health. So with the soul. Sin is the dethronement of its authorities, the misbalancing of its energies. And all the varieties of retribution are but the recoil of the injured faculties, the struggle of the insulted authorities, to vindicate and re-establish themselves. Punishment is the inevitable culmination of a discordant state of being. It is not the expression of destructive wrath. There is no malice about it. It is brought about by the self-rectifying mechanism of nature. It is intended to reattune men's discordant conduct with the eternal laws of right; and when the reattunement is effected, hell will be transformed into heaven.

This idea is finely expressed in the following oriental apologue, with which I will conclude: God was sitting on the throne of His glory, surrounded by angels and archangels, by cherubim and seraphim, and by the innumerable host of the Immortals. They were singing, and the anthem of their praise filled the vault of heaven with a pulsing flood of harmony. When they finished, there stole up, as from some far-distant region, a faint Amen. "What is that?" said God. They told Him it was the response of the damned in Hell. Then God summoned Gabriel and ordered him to bring the damned to heaven. The archangel departed joyfully on his errand of mercy. And when, after many days, he reached the lost, he told them that they must come with him to Paradise. At first they could hardly believe it. They said they were not worthy. But Gabriel reassured

them, and they started on their journey. Gradually they lost all traces of sin and woe. And when at length they joined the heavenly host, they appeared as glorious—almost more glorious—than any of the rest. God placed them next His throne, and for ever afterwards theirs were the sweetest strains of all the celestial music.

Final Restoration

I

"If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there."—PSALM cxxxix. 8.

FINAL RESTORATION. This is the technical term for the theological doctrine that evil will eventually die out and Hell be transformed to Heaven. Are there, let us inquire, any reasons which would justify your looking forward to such a consummation?

There are two. The first, of which I am going to speak to-day, is a reason suggested by the heart. *Instinct* forces us to the conclusion that the eternity of Hell would be incompatible with the very existence of Heaven. It must be admitted, a large number of nominal Christian writers have held precisely the opposite view. It has often been asserted that one of the principal felicities of Heaven would consist in looking down on Hell; that the joys of the blessed would be deepened and sharpened by constant contrast with the sufferings of the lost; that the redeemed would extract surpassing relish from the shrieks and convulsions of the damned, and sing with redoubled energy when they saw their *parents*, their *children*, their *bosom friends* in the throes of unutterable torment. *Thomas Aquinas* says, "That the saints may enjoy their beatitude more richly, a perfect sight is granted to them of the punishment of the damned." *Tertullian* says, "At that greatest of all spectacles how shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud *monarchs* groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many *magistrates* liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage *philosophers* blushing in red-hot fires with their deluded pupils; so many *musicians* more tuneful than ever in the expression of their woe; so many *dancers* tripping more nimbly from anguish than ever before from applause." *Hopkins*, a celebrated Puritan divine, speaking of the wicked, says, "The smoke of their torment shall ascend in the sight of the redeemed for ever and ever. This bright display of the divine character will be most entertaining to all who love God, and will give them the highest and the most ineffable pleasure. Should the fire of this eternal punishment cease, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven and put an

end to a great part of the *happiness* and *glory* of the blessed." Volumes have been written to the same effect.

But this is not the real teaching of the heart. It is a gratuitous piece of horror devised by the older theologians to meet a logical exigency involved in their doctrine of Hell. Unwilling to recede an inch from their dogmas, when it was suggested to them the eternal sufferings of the lost must—in some degree at any rate—mar the happiness of the saved, they had the amazing hardihood to answer, so far from it, the sight of those sufferings would be a source of ecstasy. The theory is nothing less than the deification of the Devil. It assumes that God—GOD—takes a fiendish delight in the agony of His creatures, and that by-and-by we shall be devils too.

Let us, then, turn aside from the theology of the Bookshelves and consult the theology of the heart. If we follow the guidance of our best instincts, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the eternity of Hell would practically put an end to Heaven. It would destroy the happiness of the saved. It would fill them with the direst woe. Jesus said, "There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth." It follows of course, by a moral necessity, that there must be sorrow in heaven over the unrepentant and the lost. This sorrow may indeed be alleviated—perhaps wholly quenched—by the knowledge that every retributive pang is *remedial*, and that God's great design may one day be fully crowned in the redemption of the whole human race. But what shall solace it, if the sufferings of the lost are *not* remedial, if they can never, never end, if the smoke and the shrieks of Hell must form part of the eternal constitution of the universe? Listen to a mother's lament over the damnation of her child—

His little spirit with imploring eyes
Wanders alone the dreary wilds of space,
The shadow of his pain for ever lies
Upon my soul in this new dwelling-place.
His loneliness makes me in Paradise
More lonely; and, unless I see his face,
E'en here for grief I should lie down and die
Save for my *curse* of Immortality.

There is a pretty story told of Radbod, one of the early Scandinavian kings. He was about to be baptized. After putting one foot in the water, he asked the priest if he should meet his forefathers in heaven. "No," said the priest; "pagans, unbaptized pagans, would go to hell." The king thereupon drew back his foot and refused the rite, preferring hell with his ancestors to heaven with the priest. Lavater once wrote in his diary: "I embraced in my heart all that is named *man*; *past*, *present*, and *future times and nations*; *the dead*, *the damned*, even *Satan*. I presented them to God with the warmest wishes that He would have mercy upon all." Who would not say "Amen"? Who that has a heart does not sympathize

with Burns in the quaint and kindly wish with which he concludes his "Address to the Deil"—

But, fare ye weel, auld Nickie-Ben
 Oh, wad ye tak a thocht and men
 Ye aiblins nicht—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake.
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 E'en for your sake!

The thought that even a single soul should suffer *useless, hopeless, endless* woe—

Would cast a shadow on the throne of God,
 And darken heaven.

Supposing that an earthly monarch of unlimited power had condemned one man to be stretched on the rack and plied with incessant tortures for fifty years, and supposing that everybody in the world could hear his shrieks by day and by night, would not the whole human race, from Spitzbergen to Japan, from Rio Janeiro to Siberia, implore the king's clemency for the solitary victim? So, if hell had but *one* tenant doomed to eternal anguish, a petition signed by all the moral beings in the universe, and borne by a convoy of representatives from Sirius, Alcyone, and every star in space, would be laid at the foot of the throne of God, and therein He would read the prayer, "Forgive him, and release him, if it be possible." *If it be possible.* About that I will speak next Sunday. It does not altogether depend on God. But who can believe that He would be *unwilling* to forgive? Who can believe that every created soul is more generous than the Maker and Father of all?

DIVINE COMPASSION.

Long since a dream of heaven I had,
 And still the vision haunts me oft;
 I see the saints in white robes clad,
 The martyrs with their palms aloft;
 But hearing still, in middle song,
 The ceaseless dissonance of wrong;
 And shrinking, with livid faces, from the strain
 Of sad, beseeching eyes, full of remorse and pain.

The glad song falters to a wail,
 The harping sinks to low lament;
 And through the still uplifted veil
 I see the crowned foreheads bent,
 Making more sweet the heavenly air
 With breathings of unselfish prayer.
 And a Voice saith, "O pity which is pain,
 O Love which weeps, fill up My sufferings that remain!"

"Shall souls redeemed by Me refuse
 To share My sorrow in their turn?
 Or, sin-forgiven, My gift abuse
 Of peace—with selfish unconcern?"

Has saintly ease no pitying care?
 Has faith no work, and love no prayer?
 While sin remains, and souls in darkness dwell,
 Can heaven itself be heaven, and look unmoved on hell?"

Then, through the Gates of Pain, I dream,
 A wind of heaven blows coolly in;
 Fainter the awful discords seem,
 The smoke of torment grows more thin;
 Tears quench the burning soil, and thence
 Spring sweet pale flowers of penitence;
 And through the dreary realm of man's despair
 Star-crowned an angel walks, and, lo! *God's hope* is there!

Is it a dream? Is heaven so high
 That pity cannot breathe its air?
 Its happy eyes for ever dry?
 Its holy lips without a prayer?
 My God! my God! if thither led
 By Thy free grace unmerited,
 No crown, no palm be mine, but let me keep
 A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can weep.
 —WHITTIER.

Final Restoration

II

THIS morning we come to the 35th and last sermon upon Immortality. At first I thought about half-a-dozen, or at most a dozen, sermons would be enough; but when I came to study the subject in detail, it grew on me so that I was loath to leave it. This must have been rather trying to occasional visitors. We have had fewer strangers than usual this year, and I am not surprised. Any one who drops in at the 15th or 25th or 35th sermon on a subject must be somewhat puzzled. He is placed at a considerable disadvantage: so much has to be assumed in later sermons which was explained in earlier ones. To those who have been able to attend pretty regularly I don't think I need apologize. It has probably been more inviting to them than a number of disconnected subjects. However, be that as it may, to-day we reach the end.

Lest any one should say that my sermon this morning is not orthodox, I am going to give you a text out of the Bible. Psalm cxxxix. 8: "If I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there." If God is in Hell—which undoubtedly He is, for He is everywhere—it must be with some merciful intention. This is recognized in the doctrine of what is called Final Restoration—the doctrine, viz., that evil will gradually die out and hell be eventually transformed into heaven. Are there any reasons which would justify our looking forward to such a consummation?

There are two. The first reason is suggested by the heart. Instinct

forces us to the conclusion that the eternity of Hell would be incompatible with the happiness of the redeemed. The thought that even a single soul was doomed to *useless, hopeless, endless woe*—

Would cast a shadow on the throne of God,
And darken heaven.

I spoke about that last week. The second reason—to which I am now going to call your attention—is derived from experience. It is this. Evil is already beginning to die out; hell is already beginning to be transformed into heaven. Let the process continue long enough and Final Restoration is assured. There is one difficulty, however, which may have occurred to some of you—in fact I mentioned it last Sunday. The difficulty is this. Not that God is unwilling to save us, but that we are unwilling to be saved. Final Restoration does not altogether depend on the Almighty. It rests ultimately with man. While there is sin, there must be hell. As long as we choose evil we shall be in torment. And men are free. What if some of them should choose it *for ever*? How—compatibly with their freedom—can God stop it?

Now, that is a genuine difficulty; but I think we may find a solution. Though God cannot compel men to do right, He can persuade them, and Hell is a form of persuasion. It is, as I said last Sunday, a remedial struggle, brought about by the self-rectifying mechanism of nature, to restore a perverted being to its normal state. Sin involves a dethronement of the authorities of the soul, a misbalancing of its energies. And all the varieties of retribution are *but the recoil* of the injured faculties and insulted authorities. This recoil—which we call punishment—is intended to bring our discordant conduct into harmony with the eternal laws of right. And this must always be possible while the soul continues to endure. There is not the shadow of a reason for supposing that reattunement is only possible on earth. The supposition arose from mistaking Heaven and Hell for localities—localities belonging exclusively to a future state. As we have seen, they are nothing of the kind. Heaven and hell are around us here and now as much as they ever can be anywhere—or rather I should say *within us*. They are not places to which God sends us; they are conditions which we make for ourselves. If God could *send* men to heaven, every one would be there now. If God could keep men from Hell, no one would ever be there at all. It is *we* that *make* our heaven, it is we that make our hell, according to the righteousness or unrighteousness of our conduct. The Hell which follows our wrong-doing is God's attempt to persuade us to do right. And He is succeeding—slowly but surely succeeding. Some of the worst evils—such as cannibalism and slavery—have almost passed away. Besides, God has other means of persuasion

—for example, more helpful surroundings. In this world, owing to the difficulties of Evolution, the surroundings of many are about as bad as they can be. I was reading some time ago in the newspaper of a poor waif who was up before the magistrate. He said there was only one person in the world who cared for him, and that was his father, and his father was almost always in jail. "When he's away from home," said the boy, "I don't have no show." Are you going to restrict that poor creature's probation to a few short years on earth? *And such years!* Some day, somewhere, he must have what he called "*a show*." No man can be eternally lost until all the resources of Omnipotence have been exhausted for his salvation. *Wait.* In the far-off future I think you will discover that God has been *entirely* victorious in the conflict with evil; and that Hell itself was one of the pathways—the *steepest, hardest, saddest*, no doubt, but still one of the pathways by which He led humanity to heaven.

On the banks of the Amazon there is a bird which has a particularly plaintive note. The natives call it "the cry of a lost soul." I will read a little poem about it.

In that black forest, where, when day is done,
With a snake's stillness glides the Amazon,
Darkly from sunset to the rising sun,

A cry, as of the pained heart of the wood,
The long despairing moan of solitude
And darkness, and the absence of all good,

Startles the traveller with a sound so drear,
So full of hopeless agony and fear,
His heart stands still and listens like his ear.

The guide, as if he heard a dead-bell toll,
Stares, drops his oar against the gunwale's thole,
Crosses himself and whispers, "A lost soul!"

"No, señor, not a bird. I know it well.
It is the pained soul of some infidel
Or cursed heretic that cries from hell.

"Poor fool! with hope still mocking his despair,
He wanders, shrieking on the midnight air
For human pity and for Christian prayer.

"Saints strike him dumb! Our Holy Mother hath
No prayer for him, who, sinning unto death,
Burns always in the furnace of God's wrath!"

Thus to the baptised pagan's cruel lie,
Lending new horror to that mournful cry,
The voyager listens, making no reply.

Dim burns the boat lamp, shadows deepen round
From giant trees with snake-like creepers wound,
And the black water glides without a sound.

But in the traveller's heart a secret sense
Of nature plastic to benign intents
And an eternal love in Providence,

IMMORTALITY

Lifts to the starry calm of heaven his eyes,
And, lo! rebuking all earth's ominous cries
The cross of pardon lights the tropic skies!

"Father of all!" he urges his strong plea,
"Thou lovest all; Thy erring child may be
Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee!"

"All souls are Thine; the wings of morning bear
None from that Presence which is everywhere,
Nor Hell itself can hide, for Thou art there.

"Through sins of sense, perversities of will,
Through doubt and pain, through guilt and shame and ill.
Thy pitying eye is on Thy creature still.

"Wilt Thou not make—Eternal Source and goal!—
In thy long years, life's broken circle whole,
And change to praise the cry of the lost soul?"

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